



Global Collaboration

About this Topic: Global Collaboration



Topic Mentor

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Tsedal Neeley is an assistant professor in the organizational behavior area at Harvard Business School. Professor Neeley's research focuses on the challenges that international collaborators face when attempting to coordinate work across national and linguistic boundaries, with special emphasis in the impact of language on social dynamics. Before taking up her academic career, Neeley spent ten years in industry working for companies including Lucent Technologies and The Forum Corporation in various capacities, including strategies for global customer experience, sales management development, and business flow analysis. In addition to having extensive international experience, Neeley is fluent in four languages.

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What Would You Do?

What would you do?

Rayna is a human resources manager at BigTech Electronics, a large consumer electronics company headquartered in the United States. In a move to expand revenues and market share, her company has recently acquired facilities in Asia, India, and Europe.

Rayna's boss has asked her to work with her HR counterparts in the acquired facilities to standardize processes such as performance evaluations and hiring, and to integrate them with the corporate headquarters' enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

Rayna is excited about getting started and launches the effort by hosting a two-day face-to-face meeting with her counterparts at BigTech Electronics' headquarters. But as the weeks and months pass, she begins to encounter difficulties. For example, some of her counterparts routinely miss phone conferences she has scheduled, while others dial in ten or even twenty minutes late. When they do participate, Rayna has difficulty understanding some of their thick accents. Others keep asking Rayna for more information about the process changes she's advocating, creating serious delays in the project.

During a phone call with her friend, Rayna says, "I just don't know what to do! How do I get these people to help me move this effort forward?"

What would you do?

Rayna is experiencing firsthand the difficulties that can arise during a global collaboration—whether it's working with colleagues in other countries, expanding into a new market, negotiating with someone from another country, or doing business with an overseas vendor.

In every global collaboration, profound cultural differences, language barriers, physical distance, and other realities can cause a collaboration to stumble, if not fail outright. In this case, Rayna appears to be collaborating with people whose decision-making styles and notions of time differ from hers. Language barriers are creating further challenges.

In this topic, you'll learn about the difficulties that can arise in a global collaboration and how to address those challenges by building your cultural intelligence. You'll also discover how to tackle the trickiest challenges inherent in collaborating globally—including establishing trust with your counterparts, negotiating across cultures, overcoming language barriers, surmounting physical distance problems, and aligning a global team.

How can you surmount challenges such as cultural difference, language barriers, and physical distance to ensure the success of your global collaboration?

Topic Objectives

This topic helps you:

- Develop your cultural intelligence
- Establish trust between global collaborators
- Negotiate with global partners
- Overcome common language barriers
- Navigate the geographical and technical challenges of cross-cultural collaboration
- Align global team members

Examples of global collaboration



If you're like most managers, you're collaborating more and more with people and organizations from other countries in your day-to-day work. These interactions can take a number of different forms. For example:

- **Working with *employees* in other countries:** You work for a multinational company with operations in 12 countries. You lead a team that is standardizing accounting procedures across these operations. Members of the team are located in (and are natives of) six of the countries in which your company operates.
- **Working with *vendors* in other countries:** You're responsible for developing a Web site for your company's new product. After comparing prices and service quality of several vendors who do Web site design and production, you decide to outsource the project to an overseas vendor because it seems to offer the best service at the lowest price.
- **Working to serve *customers* in other countries:** You've been tasked with marketing a new product to consumers in another country. The work entails making decisions such as how to design the product, what to call it, how to package it, what price to sell it for, and how to craft advertising copy for it.
- **Working with *companies* in other countries:** You're a member of a task force that's exploring the possible benefits of a joint venture between your company and a business in another country.

The task force's responsibilities include determining how best to negotiate terms of the arrangement with the other business—such as how much of the new entity each company will own, how long the joint venture will last, and who will get what share of the profits generated by the joint venture.

As you can see by these examples, knowing how to collaborate globally is no longer important just for country managers or employees who are taking on a temporary overseas assignment. It's crucial for every manager, at all levels in an organization.

Key Idea: Benefits of global collaboration

Global collaboration can generate important benefits for your company. For instance:

- **Employees:** If you're leading a virtual project team whose members work in different time zones, you can take advantage of 24/7 work schedules. You can take comfort in knowing that someone on your team, somewhere, is working on the project and driving it toward completion at every point in time.
- **Vendors:** If you find an overseas vendor that offers excellent work for a manageable price, you can save your company a lot of money and thus increase its profitability.
- **Customers:** If you're selling or marketing products or services to customers in other countries, you can help expand your company's market share and boost its revenues.
- **Companies:** If you're involved in forging or managing a joint venture or strategic alliance with a business located in another country, you help your firm profit from that company's knowledge of local markets, specialized capabilities (such as a talent for product innovation), resources (including money to invest), and familiarity with local ways of doing business.

Given these benefits, it's clear that all managers should learn how to collaborate globally.

When you collaborate globally, benefits spread throughout the company—and beyond.

Challenges of global collaboration

Global collaboration creates important advantages for companies. But it also presents daunting challenges. These challenges tend to crop up in:

- Cultural misunderstandings
- Lack of trust
- Mishandled negotiations
- Language barriers
- Physical distance barriers
- Lack of team identity and alignment

Cultural misunderstandings

When people from different nations interact, opportunities for confusion based on culture abound. For example:

You arrange a phone call with Charla, a member of the new virtual project team you're leading, to discuss a plan for her part of the project. At the appointed time, you dial in to the conference number. Charla doesn't dial in until 20 minutes later. You feel frustrated and insulted by her rudeness, but Charla doesn't sound guilty or worried in the least. You realize that you and Charla have very different understandings of time: In her culture, punctuality is not valued as much as it is in your own.

Leadership Insight: Educate your teams

There are a few companies in the renewable energy field that are exporting the technology. They are struggling because they don't have managers ready to manage the cross-cultural issues that they have to address. I remember when I was a project manager in our first project here in the States. It was a project of 180 megawatts in North Dakota.

I received a call from the CEO of the company. I pick up the phone and he asks me, "What are you guys doing in North Dakota?" I say, "What is wrong?" He said, "The customer has called me and we are not cooperating. We are not collaborative. We are not meeting expectations. Please let me know what is going on."

So you can imagine — the CEO is calling me directly to find out. I arrange my flight; I fly from Spain to North Dakota. It takes me two days. I ask my customer, "What is going wrong?" He says, "Well, your team doesn't show up in the mornings to the plan-of-the-day meeting. In the afternoon, we don't really know where the guys go. We leave earlier than they do and we cannot follow the project like this."

On the other hand, I ask my team, "Guys, what are you doing?" They say, "Well, we get up at the hotel early. We come here at 8:00 a.m., and then about 2:00 p.m. we drive to a place, the closest place to have lunch, and then we come back. But these guys, they go home very early. They leave at 5:00 p.m. or something."

Suddenly I realized that we had a timing issue. In Spain, we start at 8:00 in the morning and then we have two hours' break for lunch and it's very common, especially for those who are working out of home throughout the week.

That was the issue: both teams were not able to communicate to each other about these things. But what I really learned is that we didn't even think about that in advance. We didn't prepare the team for a different culture. It was an issue because both teams were really frustrated with the situation. We didn't show up in the meetings, they were asking for us and they didn't even know where we were.

So I think for those managers who are managing cross-cultural activities, it's our responsibility to really prepare our team to be able to work in another culture. We have to include that in our method, to continuously improve that and teach our team to do that. As leaders and managers, it's our responsibility.

Prepare your teams to work across geographic boundaries by raising awareness of cultural differences.

Victor Equisoain
Director, Acciona

Victor Equisoain is the Senior Director of Services for ACCIONA Wind Power North America, a wind turbine supplier operating worldwide. ACCIONA Energy has been pioneering renewable energy for nearly 20 years and is active in all major renewable-energy solutions, including solar, wind, biomass, biofuels, and small hydro.

Previously, Victor worked as a Senior Project Manager with ACCIONA Wind Power. As a civil engineer, he began his construction career working as a construction site manager, helping to develop and design urbanization projects. He developed his project management skills in the construction field as a project manager, managing renewable energy projects.

Victor holds a Master of Business Administration from EOI Business School in Spain.

Lack of trust

Mutual trust is crucial for successful collaboration. However, once you cross cultural lines, collaborators may have difficulty finding common ground. For example:

You're assembling an international team to handle a special project. During the kick-off phone conference, as the team discusses the project schedule and proposes ways of working together, tension seems to simmer between two of the team members: Jacques, who's located in France, and Anatole, who's in Russia.

After everyone hangs up, Jacques phones you and says, "Look, I don't think Anatole has the values and work habits the team needs to be successful. I just don't trust him." You talk with Jacques for a few minutes, then hang up. When you next check your voice messages, you find one from Anatole—expressing similar concerns about Jacques's trustworthiness.

You realize that Jacques and Anatole are experiencing an all-too-common problem: difficulty trusting someone who seems very different.

Mishandled negotiations

Effective negotiation is a difficult skill to master, even between colleagues of the same nationality. When you factor in cultural differences in negotiation style and approach, it is easy to see why so many global negotiations fail. Consider the following:

You're part of a team that's handling negotiations with a potential joint venture partner. When you and the team travel to the other country to begin working out possible arrangements, you're surprised when the other company's representatives—for the next five days!—want to do nothing more than socialize, go out to dinner, and talk about their families. You say to one of your teammates, "What's going on? When do we get down to business?"

The next day, at yet another dinner, you press the other company's representatives to move ahead with the negotiations. Instantly, they fall silent and exchange uncomfortable looks. You have an awful feeling that the negotiation has just taken a bad turn.

Language barriers

“ A different language is a different vision of life. ”
—Federico Fellini

When people from different countries collaborate, they may have different levels of proficiency in the common business language they're using. If non-native speakers of the language feel ashamed of their limited ability, they may withdraw from the conversation. And language differences may cause misunderstandings and frustration. For example:

You've been asked to resolve a critical customer issue by e-mail. As you scroll through the e-mail, you realize that your colleagues in another country exchanged six lengthy e-mails in their native language before requesting your involvement. You're annoyed because the one-sentence summary provided in your language doesn't include detail needed to address the customer's concerns—and your colleagues have failed to adhere to the global business language policy.

Physical distance problems

Sheer physical distance can also present challenges when you're collaborating with people from other countries. For instance:

You're trying to schedule an important phone conference with people from the numerous overseas vendors you've hired to handle different parts of a project. They're in such radically dispersed time zones that you can't find a time that doesn't force at least one member to dial in at a very inconvenient hour.

Lack of team identity and alignment

“ Our world has greatly changed: it has become much smaller. However, our perceptions have not evolved at the same pace; we continue to cling to national demarcations and the old feelings of 'us' and 'them.' ”
—Dalai Lama

Leading or participating in a global team raises special challenges. Specifically, members may have difficulty identifying as part of the team and aligning behind agreed-upon goals and responsibilities. To illustrate:

You've assembled a virtual team tasked with managing a process improvement effort. Midway into the first phase, a conflict erupts between the team members over how best to redesign the business process in question.

Your team seems to fracture along fault lines that correspond to national cultures: Members from each country stick with each other and take sides against members from other countries.

They all seem to identify themselves with their country—and not with the team or your company. This lack of team identity catalyzes other problems: People start communicating less frequently. And no one seems able to agree on anything—whether it's goals, responsibilities, or even how to go about making decisions. The project falls far behind schedule.

Avoiding costly disasters

The challenges inherent in global collaborations can quickly transform collaboration from a wellspring of valuable new opportunities for your company into a costly disaster. How to avoid this?

Start by understanding the cultural differences that can jeopardize even the most carefully planned collaboration. Then master practices for effectively handling the business activities that become especially difficult during global collaborations:

- Establishing trust
- Negotiating
- Communicating
- Interacting with others over long distances
- Building team identity and alignment

Let's start by looking now at culture, with an eye toward answering the following questions:

- What exactly *is* culture, and how do cultures differ?
- How can you build your “cultural intelligence” to navigate those differences?

What is culture?



Global collaboration is challenging for most managers because of the cultural differences they encounter when they work with people from other countries. But what *is* culture, exactly?

Experts have defined *culture* in several ways, including:

- *Culture* is a shared system of meaning, ideas, and thought that guides a group's perceptions and understanding of the world and that shapes group member's behavior.
- *Culture* is that which distinguishes the people of one country from those of another.

- *Culture* is a way of life developed and communicated by a group of people, consciously or unconsciously, to subsequent generations. It consists of ideas, habits, attitudes, customs, and traditions that help to create standards for people to coexist.

Focus on national culture

“ A national culture, if it is to flourish, should be a constellation of cultures, the constituents of which, benefiting each other, benefit the whole. ”
—T.S. Eliot

Large groups of all sorts—members of a religion, people of a particular race or social class, employees of an organization, people living in a particular country—can have their own culture.

Smaller groups can also have cultures. For example:

- People working in the IT department of a large organization often do things and see things differently from those working in the marketing department.
- Individuals who are of the same race but are in a specific social class (for instance, affluent versus impoverished) may think and behave differently from people of the same race in another social class.
- Members of one family may have different habits, customs, and traditions than members of another family.

This topic focuses on *national culture*—the general cultural systems characterizing the populations of particular countries. And it explores how national culture affects global collaboration in business.

Key Idea: Culture as an iceberg



How does a national culture manifest itself? One helpful way of answering this question is to imagine a country's culture as an iceberg floating in the ocean.

Cultural manifestations you can perceive with your senses (such as how people dress and what they eat) are "above the waterline." Those that are more abstract (such as people's values and opinions) are "below the waterline."

Culture "above the waterline"

At the tip of the iceberg—the portion above the waterline—are manifestations of a nation's culture that you can perceive with your senses. These include:

- How people converse
- How they treat visitors
- How quickly or slowly they carry out their work
- How much eye contact and touching they engage in with each other
- What they eat
- What they do for entertainment
- What their sense of humor is like
- What they wear

But this is just a small fraction of what distinguishes cultures. What's going on "below the waterline" is far more powerful.

Culture "below the waterline"

Most manifestations of a national culture lie *below* the waterline, deriving from people's philosophies, values, convictions, and attitudes. These include:

- Attitudes about the role that work should play in a person's life
- Assumptions about how individuals fit into society
- Rules about work, family, and other relationships
- Ideas regarding time (such as how important the past is)
- Beliefs about how men and women should behave
- Relative comfort with change
- Preferences regarding how leaders and followers interact

You can't perceive these "below the waterline" manifestations through your senses. Yet they're important because they powerfully influence the cultural manifestations you see "above the waterline."

The power of deeper forces

When you understand the deeper values, philosophies, and beliefs that people from a particular country hold, you can more easily predict how they might behave in different situations, and accommodate them. For instance:

- Brent, a member of your virtual team, lives in a country where people generally prefer strong leaders. You might expect him to be comfortable with firm direction and close supervision from you.
- Ella, a service provider to whom you've outsourced a project, lives in a country where people value a more relaxed supervisory style and less-rigid leadership hierarchies. She might want you to leave her alone to complete the project, rather than constantly looking over her shoulder.

When you don't take time to understand what's "below the waterline" in a national culture, you risk committing serious gaffes. Consider the American salesman who presented a potential Saudi Arabian client with a multimillion-dollar proposal in a pigskin binder—seen as highly offensive in many Muslim

cultures. He was unceremoniously tossed out and his company blacklisted from working with Saudi businesses.

A framework for understanding differences

There are many frameworks available for understanding differences in national cultures. But the one developed by management scholar Geert Hofstede is especially useful. Hofstede maintained that differences in national cultures can be plotted along five dimensions:

Individualism

Focus on personal achievement, individual rights, and independence.

Collectivism

Focus on the group, harmony, and obligation and duty to group members.



Example: Bette, a manager from an individualist culture, is sent overseas to visit a vendor that her company is using to develop an IT platform. The vendor's country has a collectivist culture. Bette's mission is to investigate why the team responsible for her company's project has been missing deadlines and making mistakes. When she arrives, she discovers that the problems stem from the project coordinator's incompetence. (For example, he never laid out a clear schedule for the work.) Yet none of the team members have confronted the coordinator on these issues because, in their culture, open acknowledgment of his failure would be perceived as a failure of the entire team.

Low Power Distance

Perceive little or no gap between people at different hierarchy levels. Managers allow participation; employees speak out.

High Power Distance

Perceive wide gap between people at different hierarchy levels. Managers issue directives; employees follow them.



Example: Tomás, a manager from a low power distance culture, oversees a team located in a country with a high power distance culture. He encourages his employees to schedule career development discussions with him. But they don't feel comfortable initiating conversations with and making requests of a superior.

Low Uncertainty Avoidance

Readily embrace change, show initiative, and accept new ideas.

High Uncertainty Avoidance

Hesitate to try new ways of doing things, start new companies, change jobs, or welcome outsiders. Emphasize continuity and stability over innovation and change



Example: Mila, a product developer from a low uncertainty avoidance culture is market-testing a prototype with consumers who live in a high uncertainty avoidance culture. The product is a livestock vaccine delivered through injection rather than a paste delivered by mouth. It promises to make it easier for ranchers to inoculate their herds against parasites and to reduce vaccine waste. But the ranchers are highly skeptical of the new way of handling this task.

Masculine

Emphasize achievement, assertiveness, and material success.

Feminine

Emphasize maintaining relationships, caring for group members, and high quality of life.



Example: David, an HR consultant who was raised in a feminine culture, has accepted an engagement at a client company headquartered in a country with a masculine culture. After starting the engagement, he sees that the company offers few services for employees (such as on-site childcare for parents and outplacement services for laid-off workers). When he suggests that the company establish such services to improve productivity, the management team resists his ideas.

Long-Term Orientation

Value actions and attitudes that affect the future, such as persistence and thrift.

Short-Term Orientation

Value actions and attitudes that are affected by the past and present, such as preserving a reputation, respecting tradition, and meeting social demands, regardless of cost.



Example: Yasmine is an operations manager who grew up in a culture with a long-term orientation. She has invited several small firms to submit proposals for a process redesign project with her company. One vendor submits a proposal so lavish that it startles her. The hand-delivered proposal arrives in an expensive, soft leather binder. It's printed in full color on high-end paper and accompanied by a professionally produced video showcasing the vendor's 50-year history and capabilities. Yasmine promptly rejects the proposal, convinced that any vendor who spends its money in this way can't possibly help her company redesign its processes for greater efficiency and manageable cost.

As this framework suggests, national cultures can differ dramatically along numerous dimensions. And these differences can present challenges for managers tasked with collaborating globally.

How to surmount those challenges? Start by building up your “cultural intelligence”—which the next section addresses.

What is cultural intelligence?

Building your “cultural intelligence” (CQ) can help you understand the profound differences that distinguish national cultures. Strengthen your CQ and you collaborate more effectively with people from other countries.

Cultural intelligence is the ability to:

- Determine how the ways in which people from a specific country interact differ from the ways in which people interact in your home country.
- Assess the ways people in one country commonly interact.
- Successfully manage an unsettling or unfamiliar situation you encounter in a foreign country.

Acquire cultural intelligence



How do you acquire the cultural intelligence needed to collaborate globally? The following steps can help:

- **Use your “heart”:** Commit to overcoming challenges and believing in your own success
- **Use your “head”:** Create a learning strategy from observation
- **Use your “body”:** Adapt your behaviors to customs in another country
- **Educate yourself:** Use resources (books, case studies, role play) and experiences (visits to a foreign country if possible) to learn all you can about another country

Use your "heart"

Understanding cultures different from your own is challenging. You’re bound to make a few mistakes here and there during global collaborations—mistakes that can lead to incomprehension (at best) or hostility (at worst).

But despite the obstacles, setbacks, and outright failures, keep reminding yourself that you have the ability to understand and adapt to a new culture. When you believe in your own efficacy, you develop the courage to overcome problems and keep learning.

Use your "head"

When you’re interacting with people from another country, look for clues to the shared understandings that characterize their national culture. For example:

Devin, a British manager at an international advertising firm, was working with a new client, a German construction and engineering company. During meetings, he observed the representatives sent by the client firm, noting consistencies across their various patterns of behavior.

Eventually, he determined that they all had several behaviors in common: They were punctual, deadline-oriented, and tolerant of unconventional advertising messages.

From these observations, he inferred much about how best to work with them—including arriving at meetings on time, respecting their schedules, and letting himself get creative in the ad campaigns he designed for them.

Use your "body"

Modify your behaviors and demeanor to show that you have to some extent entered the world of the people you're collaborating with globally. By flexibly adapting your behaviors to their customs and gestures, you show that you esteem them well enough to want to be like them. For instance:

Ana, a manager who grew up in Mexico, observed that businesspeople from the United States tended to stand several feet apart from one another while conversing in social settings. At a charity event hosted by an American client company, Ana set aside her own cultural tendency to stand closer to others while socializing, knowing that a tight social distance would make them uncomfortable. Instead, she adopted the social distance behaviors she had observed in her American colleagues.

By adopting the common habits and mannerisms of people from another country, you may eventually come to understand what it's like to *be* them. They, in turn, become more trusting and open with you.

Educate yourself

In addition to being willing to try again after a setback, observing how people from other countries operate, and adapting your own behaviors to others' customs, you can further build your CQ by educating yourself beforehand about different cultures. Seek out opportunities to:

- Read a book on the culture of a country where someone you'll be collaborating with was raised.
- Take an immersion course on the language spoken in that country. The better you can speak the language, the deeper your understanding of another culture will be.
- Watch documentaries on the culture as well as movies and TV series produced in that country to get a sense of the values, beliefs, and philosophies held by its people.
- Find a mentor who's familiar with that culture and who can help you achieve more familiarity with it.
- Take courses and training programs that use cultural awareness case studies, role play, simulations, and other interactive learning activities.
- If budgets and schedules permit, visit the home country of the people you'll be collaborating with. Even a short visit can teach you a lot about the culture. A longer stay—such as a period of living and working in the other country—will teach you even more.

The more you build up your CQ, the more easily you can foster trust with people from another country: You trust them because you understand them better. And they trust you because they see that you respect and esteem them.

The next section goes into more detail about trust—including why it's so hard to achieve during a global collaboration, why it's fundamental for surmounting other challenges you'll face during global collaborations, and how you can cultivate trust when working with someone from another country.

Activity: Raise your cultural intelligence

Building your cultural intelligence (CQ) can help you understand the differences between cultures, and help you collaborate more effectively with people from other countries. Are you doing everything you can to build your CQ?

Answer each of the following questions "yes" or "no" and write down your answers as you go.

To build my cultural intelligence, I...

1. Accept that I'm going to make mistakes when collaborating with people from cultures other than mine.
2. Treat cross-cultural gaffes (such as failing to address an overseas colleague correctly) as learning opportunities.
3. Remind myself that I'm capable of learning about and understanding other cultures.

☐ 0

You're doing very little to build your CQ by using your "heart." This is one of four key ways to strengthen your cultural intelligence.

☐ 1-2

You're doing a pretty good job of building your CQ by using your "heart," but you could do more. This is one of four key ways to strengthen your cultural intelligence. To get better at using your heart, look at any statements in this part of exercise for which you answered "No." Think of how you might start applying this heart-related practice now.

☐ 3

You're doing a great job of building your CQ by using your "heart." This is one of four key ways to strengthen your cultural intelligence.

To build my cultural intelligence, I...

4. Observe people from other cultures to see how they behave.
5. Look for attitudes that people in another culture have in common.
6. Watch people from other cultures to determine how their common habits and customs differ from those of other cultures.

☐ 0

You're doing very little to build your CQ by using your "head." To start building your CQ by using your head, look at each of the three statements in this section of the exercise. Think of how you might start applying these head-related practices now.

☐ 1-2

You're doing a reasonable job of building your CQ by using your "head," but you could do more. To get better at using your head, look at any statements in this part of the exercise for which you answered "No." Think of how you might start applying these head-related practices now.

☐ 3

You're doing an excellent job of building your CQ by using your "head." See if you're doing just as good a job at the other CQ-building elements.

7. Follow the social customs in the home countries of the people I'm doing business with (such as how close together people stand while talking).

8. Match my gestures to those commonly used by people I'm collaborating with from other cultures.

9. Adapt my demeanor and conversational style to that of the people from other cultures with whom I'm doing business.

☐ 0

You're doing very little to build your CQ by using your "body." To start building your CQ by using your body, look at each of the three statements in this section of the exercise. Think of how you might start applying these head-related practices now.

☐ 1-2

You're doing a satisfactory job of building your CQ by using your "body," but you could do more. To get better at using your body, look at any statements in this part of exercise for which you answered "No." Think of how you might start applying these body-related practices now.

☐ 3

You're doing an admirable job of building your CQ by using your "body." See if you're doing just as good a job at the other CQ-building elements.

To build my cultural intelligence, I...

10. Take courses and attend workshops to gain familiarity with other cultures.

11. Read books and watch documentaries on the home countries of people I collaborate with.

12. Find mentors who can help me learn more about the cultures of people I'll be collaborating with.

☐ 0

You're doing very little to build your CQ by educating yourself about people with backgrounds different from your own. To start building your CQ in this way, look at each of the three statements in this section of the exercise. Think of how you might start applying these self-educated-related practices now.

☐ 1-2

You're doing a decent job of building your CQ by educating yourself about people with backgrounds different from your own, but you could do more. To get better at educating yourself, look at any statements in this part of exercise for which you answered "No." Think of how you might start applying these self-education-related practices now.

☐ 3

You're doing a great job of building your CQ by educating yourself about people with backgrounds different from your own.

What is trust?



Trust plays a key role in every global collaboration—whether you're negotiating with someone from another country, selling products and services to customers in an overseas market, working with a foreign vendor, or participating in or managing a geographically dispersed team.

In the context of such collaborations, “trust” can be defined as *confidence in a person's integrity, competence, reliability, and benevolence*. When you trust others with whom you're collaborating, you believe they:

- Will be honest
- Will do what they say they'll do

- Have the collaboration's best interests at heart
- Possess the skills needed to achieve mutually important goals
- Genuinely care about others' well-being

Key Idea: Trust is crucial for global collaboration

In any global collaboration, trust is critical. When the participants trust one another, they cooperate more. And they stand a better chance of surmounting the difficulties and conflicts that can arise during global collaboration. For instance, they:

- **Negotiate more effectively:** Participants respect one another, assume that everyone involved wants to craft a mutually satisfying outcome, and believe that each player will honor the agreed-upon terms of the deal. So they persevere through tense moments and explore a wider range of options.
- **Overcome misunderstandings caused by language differences:** For example, suppose one participant says something that seems rude on the surface. With trust, another participant attributes the supposed gaffe to cultural differences, rather than to malicious intent.
- **Resolve problems caused by physical distance:** Participants work out difficulties scheduling meetings across numerous time zones.
- **Unite and align with a purpose larger than themselves:** Instead of fracturing along cultural or geographic lines when misunderstandings or conflicts arise, participants stay focused on the goals of the collaboration and identify with the overall team.

Trust enables all participants in a global collaboration to bring their unique experiences and perspectives to the effort. This diversity of contributions in turn spurs creativity, decision making, and productivity.

Why is trust so vital for global collaborations?

Why does trust suffer?

Despite trust's importance in any global collaboration, it's difficult to establish trust when you're working with people from other countries. Why? Trust grows from people's direct knowledge of and firsthand experience with one another. And during a global collaboration, it's hard to gain such knowledge and experience. For example:

- If you're negotiating with people from a foreign country, you may not be able to meet them in person first. How do you know they "play fair"?
- If you've just outsourced a project to an overseas vendor, you probably won't be familiar with its internal operations and any challenges its people are facing. How do you know they will be able to get the job done?
- If you're managing a geographically dispersed team, you can't always have regular face-to-face contact with your members. How do you know they care about the project and are doing their work?

Given such difficulties, is it even possible to establish a sufficient level of trust during a global collaboration? Fortunately, it is.

Three strategies for building trust

Even though it's challenging to establish trust during global collaborations, it's also *the* foundation for success. The good news is that you can take actions to build trust. The following three strategies will help:

- Foster rapport between participants
- Establish shared goals and document progress toward them
- Showcase participants' competence

Foster rapport between participants

Rapport, or a positive personal connection between people, engenders trust. To build rapport, consider the following tactics:

- **Schedule initial meetings in person.** If you can hold an in-person meeting to launch the collaboration, do so. Face-to-face encounters help everyone get to know each other's communication styles and backgrounds, build rapport, and forge working and social relationships. If an in-person meeting isn't possible, consider using teleconferencing technologies. A blend of screen-sharing programs, instant messaging, and phone conferencing can be the next best thing to a face-to-face gathering.
- **Create an online roster for participants.** Include a photo and brief paragraph about each person's background, interests, and skills, as well as contact information. This information will give participants common ground when they are communicating by phone and e-mail.

Establish shared goals and document progress

When participants in a global collaboration establish shared goals and document their progress, they gain confidence in one another's reliability—a key element of trust. To make this happen:

- **Agree on goals.** Together with the other participants in your collaboration, agree on what you're trying to achieve and how you'll all work toward those goals. Alignment and clarity on these matters make it easier for people to follow through on commitments, which further engenders trust.
- **Document project actions and status.** Consider using a Web-based program to enable participants to document actions they've taken during the collaboration, lessons learned, and explanations for unexpected situations (for example, "We were short-staffed this week and will need another day to finish the prototype we're developing for you"). When people see evidence that everyone is doing his or her job, trust increases.

Showcase participants' competence

Confidence in the skills and talents of fellow participants in a global collaboration is another crucial component of trust. Collaborators want to know that the other participants have the competencies needed to get the job done. Take every opportunity to express appreciation for various participants' contributions—and circulate those expressions to all participants.

A delicate business



As a manager, you may participate in or lead many kinds of negotiations with people from other countries. For example, you might need to:

- Negotiate a solution to quality problems experienced by an overseas manufacturer of your product.
- Reopen a contract with a client company headquartered in another nation because circumstances beyond your control have caused your raw-materials costs to skyrocket.
- Agree on fees and deadlines with service vendors you're hiring to handle a special project.

Negotiation is always a delicate business. But when the people you're bargaining with come from a country other than yours, cultural differences can make it even more challenging.

Differences in negotiating approaches

Given the diversity of national cultures, negotiators from different countries often use wildly different approaches when trying to craft a deal. The table shows examples.

Cross-cultural Negotiation Differences

In some countries, negotiators tend to . . .	In others, they . . .
Open talks by emphasizing the negative	Open talks by emphasizing the positive
Believe that withholding information gives them power	Believe that sharing information gives them power

Believe it is OK to say “no” outright	Believe it is rude to say “no” outright
Emphasize the details of the deal in the early stages of negotiation	Emphasize relationship-building in the early stages of negotiation
Make decisions by themselves	Make decisions by consensus
Value flexibility in agreements	Believe that once a decision is made, changing one’s mind is shameful
Use direct confrontation (for example, stating demands more aggressively) to arrive at agreements	Use indirect confrontation (for instance, asking questions) to arrive at agreements
Ask questions to determine the other side’s priorities and interests	Present proposals and use the other side’s reactions to discover its priorities and interests

Four strategies for negotiating across borders

The many differences in negotiation styles you might encounter while forging a deal across cultures may seem discouraging. But there are strategies that can help you negotiate effectively with foreign partners. These strategies are:

- Build trust
- Get to know the other party
- Adapt your style
- Learn as you go

Read on to learn more about these four strategies.

Build trust

For negotiators from many countries around the world, achieving trust is essential to crafting mutually beneficial agreements. They want to get to know you and assure themselves you're reliable before doing business with you. To gain their trust:

- If at all possible, take time to have lunch or dinner with prospective negotiation partners abroad. Don't talk business right away—ask them about what things are like in their country.
- Find something you have in common with your foreign partners—such as a favorite sport, wine, hobby, or piece of music.
- Show that you're in no hurry to conclude the deal, even if that means dropping the subject and talking about the weather for a while.
- Make sure you can answer all questions presented by the other person.

Get to know the other party

Learn as much as you can about negotiating rituals in the country where your foreign partners are from, the person you'll be bargaining with (since people from the same culture can still have different negotiation styles), and decision-making practices in the other country.

The more you know about these things, the more easily you can adapt your negotiation style to arrive at a mutually satisfying agreement.

Assess negotiation rituals

To better understand how negotiations tend to play out in the country where your foreign partners reside:

- **Research how people from specific countries tend to negotiate.** Find out what you can about rituals governing matters such as when to socialize and when to talk business, how much to haggle over terms of the deal, and what people do to demonstrate their trustworthiness. Keep in mind that the degree to which people's styles reflect the norms of their home culture will vary, so be prepared for interactions to differ from your expectations.
- **Enlist an adviser from your counterpart's culture.** If you or the person you'll be negotiating with has little or no cross-cultural experience enlist someone from your counterpart's culture to serve as your adviser during the negotiation. This person can help you size up the situation, coach you as needed, and even interject if he or she feels you've misinterpreted something the other person said or did during the negotiation.

Assess negotiation partners

A prerequisite for successful negotiation is gaining a basic understanding of your negotiation partners' backgrounds and what biases they may have. To learn this information:

- **Research your counterparts.** Find out as much as you can about their histories, experience, skills, personalities, and communication style.

- **Use an intermediary if necessary.** If you have trouble getting information about these people, ask an intermediary with contacts at that organization to make inquiries for you.

Understand the decision-making processes

To determine the decision-making processes that will most likely be used in the other country:

- **Identify the players.** Learn who typically has a say in business negotiations in the country where your counterpart is from. For instance, in some countries, these “extra players” might include labor leaders, local political officials, and even government ministries.
- **Find out who decides what.** For each player you’ve identified, figure out which decisions he or she will be responsible for making during the upcoming negotiation.
- **Discern the informal influences that can make or break a deal.** Depending on the country, informal influencers might include powerful families, protection rackets, and industrial groups linked by a web of business ties.

Adapt your approach

Use what you’ve learned about your counterparts and how negotiations are handled in their country to adapt your approach to the deal at hand. The table shows examples.

If you’re dealing with negotiators who. . .	Use this approach . . .
Require consensus among members of their team and other players	Accept that the deal is going to take time and that these negotiators will likely require extensive information. Be prepared to provide information repeatedly in great detail and in different forms.
Are more comfortable with indirect confrontation than direct confrontation	Try asking questions. For instance, if you have concerns about quality problems with an overseas manufacturer’s work, ask, “Do all the units have this problem? Will this be a concern for customers?”

Come from a culture characterized by rigid hierarchy and have high perceived status compared with your company	Gain concessions through status-based persuasion. For example, if you want to reopen a contract with a large customer because of skyrocketing materials costs, meet with him, express gratitude for the relationship, and say something like, "We need your help."
Tend not to ask questions or offer much information about their own priorities and interests	Use proposals to gain information. By presenting a series of proposals for various aspects of the deal, you can observe the other individuals' reactions, listen to their responses, and draw conclusions about their priorities and interests.

Activity: Help Mona negotiate

Negotiating across cultures is even more challenging than sealing a deal with someone from your own culture. Do you have what it takes to help Mona forge a successful agreement?

Mona works for a consumer products company headquartered in the United States. She has hired WriteRight, an overseas language-services firm, to produce translations of the packaging, marketing, Web site, and other materials that accompany her company's products. When they began collaborating, Mona was pleased with WriteRight's work. However, WriteRight has recently been missing deadlines, and some of the translations have contained errors.

Mona is frustrated and wants to negotiate solutions to these problems with Nishant, the manager at WriteRight who's handling her account. What could she do to boost the chances of a successful negotiation?

- ☐ Phone Nishant to restate the deadlines and service-quality requirements WriteRight had agreed to when the two companies signed the contract for the work.

Not the best choice. In the United States, negotiators tend to be comfortable using direct confrontation (such as stating their demands assertively) to arrive at agreements. But people in other cultures may not necessarily negotiate this way. Before taking this approach, Mona should find out how people tend to negotiate in the country where WriteRight is based. She could then adapt her approach accordingly, increasing her odds of arriving at a mutually attractive agreement with Nishant.

- ☐ Research how businesspeople in the country where WriteRight is based tend to negotiate.

Correct choice. Before she starts negotiating solutions to the problems with Nishant, Mona should find out his country's rituals concerning negotiations, such as when to talk business, how much to haggle over terms, and how people demonstrate trustworthiness. By doing so, she can more easily adapt her approach to the negotiation. For instance, Mona may learn that people in Nishant's home country tend to open negotiations by emphasizing what's going well and then move on to what's not going well, or that they believe it's rude to say "no" outright to a proposal. It will be important for her to know these things before discussing her concerns with Nishant and trying to negotiate a solution.

☐ List questions to ask Nishant to determine what his priorities and interests will be when they discuss her concerns about WriteRight.

Not the best choice. It's true that in some countries, negotiators tend to ask their counterparts questions to determine the other side's priorities and interests. But in other countries, negotiators take a different approach. For example, they may present proposals and then use the other party's reactions to discover his or her priorities and interests. Mona shouldn't assume that people in WriteRight's home country negotiate in the same way people in her own country negotiate. She should instead research the other country's negotiation rituals before deciding how to approach Nishant.

Mona doesn't have a lot of time to research how people tend to negotiate in the country where WriteRight is based. But she does discover one thing: In WriteRight's home country, negotiators often open talks by emphasizing what's going well. She arranges a phone appointment with Nishant to discuss her concerns about WriteRight's work. She starts the conversation by mentioning what she appreciates about the work so far. Here's how their discussion proceeds:

Mona: Thanks for taking time to talk with me, Nishant. I appreciate it. I'm also grateful for how you handled the first part of the project, when you delivered the translation to us ahead of schedule.

Nishant: You are very welcome, Mona. I'm glad to have the chance to "meet" you—even if it is only on the phone.

Mona: OK, so let's talk about problems we've been having with some of your more recent work.

Nishant (pausing): ... It ... It sounds like you are under a lot of pressure over there. Let me say, I sympathize. We all have busy seasons, don't we?

What should Mona say next to move the discussion in a productive direction?

☐ "So true. That's why I'm eager to know your thoughts about what's causing the recent translation errors. With your help, I know we can get this situation fixed."

Not the best choice. Mona failed to notice that, based on Nishant's comments so far, he comes from a culture in which people emphasize relationship building at the start of a negotiation, rather than discussing the deal's details first. Though Mona's comments are respectful, they won't help her foster the sense of relationship Nishant needs to achieve trust. And for negotiators around the world, achieving trust is essential to crafting mutually beneficial agreements.

☐ "Well, I guess so. But one thing's for sure: The recent project delays are coming at a really bad time for us."

Not the best choice. Mona has missed an important cue. Nishant's comments so far in this conversation suggest that he comes from a culture in which people emphasize relationship building early on in a negotiation, instead of discussing the deal's details first. By making this comment, Mona misses an opportunity to forge a personal connection with Nishant. Without a sense of connection, Nishant may have difficulty trusting Mona. And for negotiators around the world, achieving trust is essential to crafting mutually beneficial agreements.

☐ "We sure do. Things have been crazy here for us. What times of year tend to be most hectic for you?"

Correct choice. Nishant's comments so far in this conversation suggest that he comes from a culture in which negotiators emphasize relationship building early on, instead of jumping immediately into the details of the deal. By making this comment, Mona shows that she's aware of common ground that she and Nishant share, which can support the sense of a relationship being built and thus foster trust. And by asking him questions about his work, she further strengthens connections with him.

Mona builds a sense of relationship with Nishant during the early part of their conversation by discussing common challenges facing their two companies. The talk then turns for a little while to their families and hobbies, where they discover a shared interest in classical music. After some time, the conversation proceeds as follows:

Nishant: So, you said in your e-mail that you had some concerns about the current project.

Mona: Yes. Some parts are coming to us late, and there have been errors in the translations.

Nishant: OK, what exactly has happened?

Mona: Well, I don't have all the specifics, but the key thing is that the delays and errors are putting our product launch schedules in danger.

Nishant: Can you say more about what's been wrong? I'd like to be able explore your concerns with my colleagues so we can decide what to do.

What should Mona say next to move the discussion in a productive direction?

☐ "Give me a day to pull the information together. Then let's talk again tomorrow or Thursday."

Correct choice. Nishant's comments suggest that he comes from a culture in which negotiators tend to value consensus among members of their organization. In such cultures, people often require extensive, detailed information before making decisions in a negotiation. If Mona gathers specific, thorough data on the recent delays and errors in WriteRight's work, Nishant could then share the data with key players at WriteRight (such as his boss and members of the project team). Once they have the data, they could more easily find the root causes of these problems and arrive at potential solutions.

○ "Let's see . . . I know that the last part of the project came to us a few days after the deadline. And I think some of the names of the product features were wrong."

Not the best choice. Nishant's comments suggest that he comes from a culture in which negotiators tend to value consensus among members of their organization. In such cultures, people often require extensive, detailed information before making decisions in a negotiation. Mona's comments wouldn't provide enough detail to help Nishant and other key players in his organization (such as his boss and the project team) identify the root causes of the problem and generate potential solutions. To provide truly useful data, Mona should document all delays (for example, which parts of the project were how many days late) and errors (including how many errors, of what types, in what languages, in which parts of the project).

○ "To be honest, I'm not sure the details really matter. What's most important to me is that we identify what's causing the delays and errors, so we can get the project back on track."

Not the best choice. Mona has missed signals from Nishant suggesting that in his culture, negotiators tend to value consensus among members of their organization. People from such cultures often require extensive information before arriving at decisions in a negotiation. If Mona gathers specific, comprehensive data on the delays and errors in WriteRight's work, Nishant could then share the data with key players at WriteRight (such as his boss and members of the project team). Once they have the data, they could identify the problems' root causes and work with Mona to develop solutions.

Key Idea: Learn as you go

Even if you thoroughly familiarize yourself with your counterpart in a negotiation and adapt your approach to his or her cultural and personal style, things may still not go as you might like when you're forging a deal. You may feel frustrated if you've worked hard to build your negotiation partner's trust and even adapted your negotiation style only to find that your effort does not seem to be paying off.

For that reason, it's important to stay calm and learn as you go—to pay close attention to the negotiation's dynamics as they unfold, and to make adjustments as needed to arrive at a successful deal.

To do this, listen carefully during talks:

- **If you're unsatisfied with the answers you receive:** Reframe your questions and try again. For example, if you propose something and get no reaction from your counterpart, try making the proposal more specific.
- **If you're unsure about what the other side said:** Repeat what you think you heard. Ask if you've understood correctly, then listen for an affirmation or a correction from the other person.

Things don't always go as planned when negotiating across cultures. What can you do to make your deal successful?

Understand the issues



Think about the global collaborations you've participated in as a manager. Have language barriers ever caused misunderstandings? In today's globalized business world, perhaps you've witnessed the following difficulties:

- Collaborators all speak different languages, so they use interpreters. The interpreters don't always capture the full meaning of what each person has said.
- Participants all speak the agreed-upon common business language, but differences in semantics, accents, tone, pitch, and dialects create confusion. For example, for some participants, the phrase "table a motion" means "We want to postpone the discussion"; to others, it means "We want to discuss the issue now."

Such challenges can catalyze negative emotions in global collaborators, creating further problems for those involved.

Understand the emotions

Language barriers can stir up painful and destructive emotions within global collaborators. In particular, participants who aren't fluent in the language that most of the collaborators are using may feel:

- Anxious about using the wrong words to convey their ideas
- Embarrassed by their lack of fluency
- Excluded from or devalued by the circle of native, fluent speakers
- Suspicious that the native speakers are "talking about us," "hiding something," or "laughing at us"

In situations where a company mandates that all participants in a global collaboration speak a specific language, non-native speakers of that language may also feel:

- A lowering of social status relative to that of native speakers
- Stigmatized by their identity as non-native speakers

- Resentment toward the language-based privilege that native-speaker participants seem to have
- A lack of trust toward native speakers

These painful emotions can cause participants to react in unproductive ways.

Understand the reactions

When language barriers catalyze misunderstandings and uncomfortable emotions, participants in a global collaboration can react in ways that hamper progress. The table shows examples:

Participants who <i>aren't</i> fluent in the common business language may . . .	Participants who <i>are</i> fluent in the common business language may . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdraw during phone conferences or meetings, depriving others of their viewpoints and ideas • Switch back to the language they're fluent in, causing other participants to feel excluded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question non-native speakers' competence, and may stop asking for their ideas and opinions • Become impatient with non-native speakers' need for time to understand what's being said, and push the conversation forward, alienating nonfluent speakers

Key Idea: Foster inclusive communication

How can you help prevent language barriers from sabotaging a global collaboration you're involved in? If you're managing a group whose members have different levels of proficiency with

the official business language, take steps to foster inclusive communication:

- Provide training for participants who have a weak command of the language or who lack confidence in speaking and writing the language.
- Reinforce use of the official language at every opportunity.
- Avoid implying that non-native speakers of the official language have a “problem” and that native speakers do not. Instead, send the message that everyone shares in the challenges of cross-lingual communication and that all should invest time in learning how to work and speak together.
- Create a glossary of technical terms, acronyms, and figures of speech used in the official language (such as what is meant by “tabling a motion”). Distribute it to all participants.

Also think about your own fluency in the official language. If you’re fluent, take steps to help nonfluent speakers understand you. If you’re not, master any fears you may have about making mistakes.

Language barriers can sabotage collaboration. What steps can you take to foster inclusive communication?

Leadership Insight: Language policies

English being the mandated business language around the world can be problematic, because language is one of those things that people just use naturally, and they may not adhere to the new English-language policy. They may slip into their native language and work in ways that are most useful to them. For global managers, it's always important to make sure that their employees are adhering to the one-language rule. If not, you can have these incidents. I'll give you an example of this.

I was sitting and observing a software development team in Germany that works very closely with another sub-team in India. While I was there, there was this sudden explosion with one of their customers. Their systems had failed — millions of dollars at stake — and suddenly the leader in Germany was trying to figure out who knew enough to solve this problem.

It turned out it was the sub-team in India that could solve this problem. He contacted them right away. I was sitting in the room, and the sub-team in India was talking to this manager and saying, "We couldn't even begin to resolve this problem," because the list of items that identified these problems was written in German.

And remember, English was the mandated business language in this company. So they had to run around and look for a translator. In the meantime, customers were going crazy – VP levels were trying to get on the plane to go to the customers. It just became this very big issue that took a very long time to resolve. And this is because not everyone was adhering to this language mandate.

So I think there are these policies, these language policies that do exist. And managers have to not only reinforce that everyone is using them, but they have to be really in tune with what their employees are doing with communication because you can get into trouble otherwise.

Using English for business can be challenging when it's not your native language. It's important, however, to adhere to language policies to ensure effective communication during global collaboration.

Tsedal Neeley

Assistant Professor, Organizational Development, Harvard Business School

Tsedal Neeley is an assistant professor in Organizational Behavior at Harvard Business School. Her research focuses on the challenges that international collaborators face when attempting to coordinate work across national and linguistic boundaries, with special emphasis in the impact of language on social dynamics.

Tsedal was a Stanford University School of Engineering Lieberman award recipient for excellence in teaching and research. Before her academic career, Professor Neeley worked for Lucent Technologies and The Forum Corporation.

With extensive international experience, Professor Neeley is fluent in four languages.

She received her Ph.D. from Stanford University's Department of Management Science and Engineering, specializing in Organizational Studies.

Help nonfluent speakers understand you

If you're fluent in the collaboration's agreed-upon language, help nonfluent speakers understand you:

- Speak slowly, giving others time to grasp what you're saying.
- Periodically ask others to tell you what they understand you to have said. Then paraphrase what they've said to check your own understanding.
- Use simple vocabulary and avoid slang, jargon, acronyms, and colloquial expressions.
- If possible, use pictures, models, or diagrams to help others see what you're seeing.

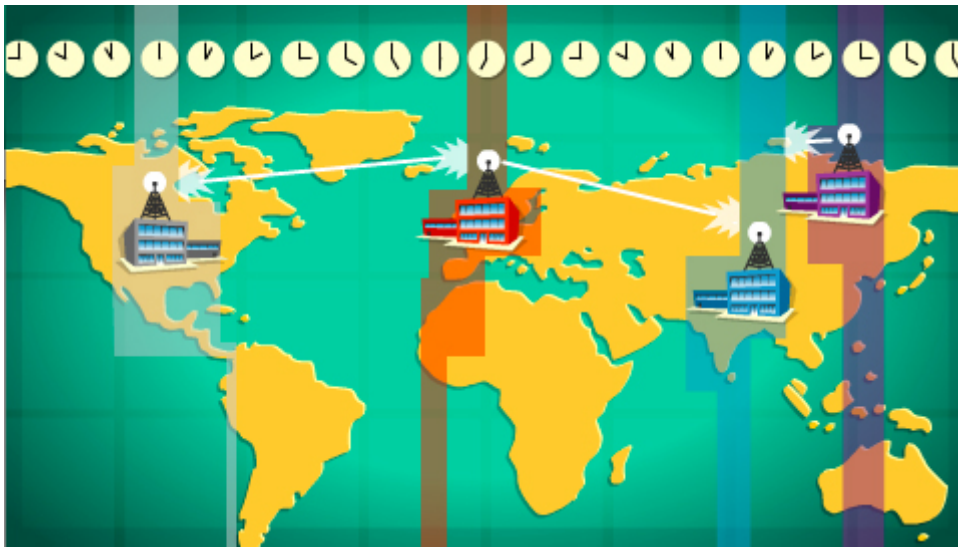
If you decide to use an interpreter, agree on some ground rules first. For example, ask your interpreter not to answer questions for you during the conversation with your counterpart.

Master your fears

If you're not fluent in the collaboration's agreed-upon language, summon up your courage:

- Give yourself permission to make mistakes and to rely on others' goodwill.
- Let your enthusiasm and interest in people and the collaboration override any fears about getting every word right.
- Remind native speakers of your limitations and ask them to repeat something they've said or to speak more slowly.

Understand the challenges



When you're collaborating with people from other countries, the sheer physical distance between participants can pose serious challenges. These challenges include:

- **Trouble coordinating meetings** across widely disparate time zones
- **Communication difficulties** stemming from limitations of technologies such as e-mail, phone conferencing, videoconferencing, and instant messaging
- **Lack of mutual knowledge** about how collaborators conduct business in their respective locales or carry out particular tasks or processes

Read on to learn more about these challenges.

Trouble coordinating meetings

With collaborators living in far-flung time zones, finding a time when everyone can take part in a phone conference can be difficult. Some participants are inevitably inconvenienced by having to dial in during very early morning or late evening hours.

To be available for calls when everyone else is, some collaborators may lengthen their workday or their workweek. These collaborators may become resentful over time if they are repeatedly asked to extend their schedule.

Communication difficulties

Many global collaborators rely on a range of mediating technologies to communicate. But these technologies can pose problems. For instance:

- One-to-one e-mail exchanges can keep nonrecipients from receiving key updates on the project they're working on. But if senders copy everyone on each e-mail message, recipients may feel overwhelmed. They may start deleting important e-mails without reading them.
- Confusion about e-mail protocol can cause tensions. For example, Frank sends an e-mail to members of his global team. One of them doesn't acknowledge receipt of his message. Frank concludes that she's ignoring his communication and takes offense. He later discovers that she didn't realize Frank expected her to acknowledge the message.
- Excessive e-mailing can cause collaborators to lose control over circulation of crucial documents (such as product specifications or software code). People end up working from different versions

of the same document, spawning errors and confusion.

- Phone conferencing doesn't enable participants to see one another, so they can't use visual cues such as facial expressions to interpret one another's comments and state of mind.
- Many videoconferencing systems are marred by distracting time delays.
- Instant messaging is effective only if people are working the same hours.

Limits of even leading-edge tools

Some Web-based conferencing tools have arisen to address problems with older communication technologies. These tools offer features such as:

- Text chat for participants who aren't equipped with sound or video capability
- A whiteboard for team members to conduct brainstorming sessions or create and view graphics in real time
- Application sharing that lets participants develop presentations or other documents together during the conference

Even these tools have limitations. For example, audio quality can be poor. Often, technical and firewall problems crop up. For desktop sharing programs, participants may find it cumbersome passing controls back and forth during the conference. And absent the visual cues that naturally occur during live meetings, people may have difficulty figuring out whose turn it is to speak.

Lack of mutual knowledge

“ The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said. ”
—Peter F. Drucker

Geographically dispersed collaborators often have difficulty gaining familiarity with one another's ways of conducting business or carrying out tasks and processes. For example:

- Siobhan, an account manager for a multinational management consultancy, is based in one country. She doesn't know that her colleagues based in another country take time to cultivate relationships before transacting business. She grows frustrated with the extra time her counterparts require to close deals with new clients.
- Siobhan's counterparts work much more closely than she does with specific clients based in their country. But they don't always remember to distribute to Siobhan the additional information they've gained about those clients. Thus Siobhan doesn't have a complete understanding of the clients' needs, and she can't contribute ideas for serving them.

Leadership Insight: Face-to-face contact

For managers to assume that you can conduct all of your global work without any face-to-face contact is a mistake. Technology is great. It allows people to connect, to communicate, to interact, but it's not sufficient. I have understood in my work that firsthand experience is crucial for two reasons. Number one, by traveling to the site of colleagues in other countries, you get direct knowledge of what they're doing. I'll give you an example of this.

There's this company, a company that has global operations around the world, with offices in Taiwan and factories in Taiwan. And one of the U.K. employees traveled to the Taiwanese office for the first time and was so surprised to learn the scale and the mass of the Taiwanese operation. He just had no concept of this. That was the kind of knowledge that this person gained by traveling there.

But the second type of knowledge that you gain is what I call "reflected" knowledge. And what reflected knowledge is, is you're able to see your own operation through the lens of the place in which you traveled. So for this U.K. manager, going to Taiwan helped him understand the limitations of how the U.K. operations impacted the Taiwanese office.

And so the lesson here is that you learn about the other site, you learn about your own site, and those limitations. It allows you to change your own behaviors to make for a more effective working relationship. So you really do need the firsthand experience and combination of the other technologies in order to have successful global collaborations.

Traveling to meet colleagues in other countries gives you direct knowledge of what they're doing and better understanding of how they perceive you.

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Tackle the challenges

Coordinating across time zones, leveraging communication technologies, and ensuring that collaborators are familiar with one another's ways of conducting business all become more difficult when global collaborators are separated by extensive physical distance. How can you overcome these challenges? The following strategies can help:

- Manage time-zone differences
- Create shared workspaces
- Close mutual knowledge gaps

Continue reading to learn more about these strategies.

Manage time-zone differences

To manage time-zone differences:

- **Clarify assumptions.** With your fellow collaborators, clarify assumptions—and even laws—about when it is considered acceptable to conduct business and take part in phone conferences. For example, is it OK to call an overseas vendor during his or her evening or weekend hours to discuss issues with the project?
- **Strive for fairness.** Try to schedule each meeting at a time that’s manageable for all participants in the collaboration. If it’s impossible to avoid inconveniencing some participants, schedule meetings at different times so that the inconvenience is equally shared.

Create shared workspaces

To compensate for the limitations of communication technologies, consider creating a shared online workspace for your global collaboration. This secure space would be accessible around the clock by users who have permission to use the site. (They gain access through a password and login information.) On their own time, participants can:

- Post updates on their parts of the collaboration
- Conduct online discussions about their project
- Examine one another’s postings in preparation for a virtual meeting

Some shared workspaces even have several “walls” devoted to particular aspects of the collaboration. The table shows examples.

This shared workspace “wall” ...	Shows ...
"People"	Individual collaborators’ contact information, accomplishments, areas of expertise, and interests
"Purpose"	The collaboration’s mission, goals, tasks involved in meeting the goals, and status of each task
"Meeting center"	Notices of when virtual meetings and conference calls are being held, who is expected to attend,

agendas, minutes, and communication protocols (such as how quickly collaborators are expected to respond to messages)

Key Idea: Close mutual knowledge gaps

To close the knowledge gaps that can arise between geographically dispersed collaborators:

- **Foster understanding.** Explain to your fellow collaborators how you normally conduct business and carry out the particular tasks and processes essential to the collaboration at hand. Ask questions to encourage them to do the same.
- **Establish knowledge-sharing protocols.** For instance, with the other participants in your collaboration, arrive at agreed-upon rules governing when and how collaborators will update each other with important information. Such information could include insights about clients you have in common, problems participants have solved, and lessons they've learned from mistakes.
- **Get people talking.** Collaborators separated by physical distance have more difficulty detecting and working through conflicts than those who are not. That's because their more limited communication makes it difficult for them to establish trust.

To overcome this situation, create opportunities for collaborators to communicate informally and spontaneously. For example, if your collaboration has a shared online workspace, contribute frequently to threaded discussions on the site. Encourage others to do the same. During phone conferences, mention interests that several participants have in common.

How can you bridge knowledge gaps between collaborators working across the globe?

Activity: Coping with challenges

Collaborating globally can present some daunting challenges—from coordinating meetings across disparate time zones to communication difficulties based on limitations of technologies. Test your ability to surmount these challenges for a successful collaboration.

Monique is preparing to manage a global team responsible for developing a new enterprise resource planning system for large companies. The team will comprise 15 members. Eight of them will be located in the United States, two in London, and five in Japan. What steps could Monique take to help ensure that her team successfully carries out its project?

Suggest that all team members use instant messaging (IM) to keep each other up to date on progress on the project.

☐ Yes

Not the best choice. Instant messaging is most effective when team members are all working the same hours. With some of Monique's team members in the United States, others in London, and still others in Japan, it's not likely that they will all be on the same work schedule. Thus some will be unable to stay current with IMs sent by others.

☐ No

Correct choice. Instant messaging is most effective when team members are all working the same hours. With some of Monique's team members in the United States, others in London, and still others in Japan, it's not likely that they will all be on the same work schedule. Thus some will be unable to stay current with IMs sent by others.

Create an online roster for team members, showing their photo and contact information and describing their backgrounds and interests.

☐ Yes

Correct choice. An online roster can be a powerful tool for establishing trust—an essential ingredient for success in a global team. The roster puts a human face on each of the team members and gives them common ground when they're communicating during work on the project.

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During the kick-off meeting for the project, describe in turn each team member's skills and achievements.

☐ Yes

Correct choice. Showcasing global team members' competence can help build each member's confidence that their fellow participants have the skills needed to get the job done. In addition to describing team members' skills and achievements during the kick-off meeting, Monique should take every opportunity to express appreciation for various participants' contributions during the project efforts—and circulate those expressions to all team members.

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Charge the U.S. team members with leading all virtual meetings, since they are the largest subgroup within the team.

☐ Yes

Not the best choice. In a global team, giving some subgroups significantly more say in team meetings can cause the other subgroups to become resentful. An “us versus them” attitude can arise, in which subgroups fracture along national lines. People begin seeing themselves more as members of their own cultures than as members of the team. When this happens, communication and collaboration break down.

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It's late in the year. Guy, a project manager at an electronics company based in Montreal, has just signed a contract with a manufacturer based in China to mass-produce a new product that Guy's company has developed. What could Guy do to ensure a successful collaboration with this overseas vendor?

Invite his main contact at the Chinese manufacturer to visit him in Canada, so they can meet in person and go over the process that will be used to produce the product.

☐ Yes

Not the best choice. While a face-to-face meeting is always valuable for any global collaboration, asking the Chinese manager to travel to Canada probably wouldn't be the best way to ensure the project's success. Ideally, Guy would travel to China if his company can afford to send him. He could then observe the first production run and work with local contacts to address any problems. This visit would also provide Guy an excellent opportunity to fill any gaps in his knowledge about how the company carries out tasks and processes.

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Schedule phone conferences or online meetings with his main contacts at the manufacturer during times that are most convenient to him, since he is the customer.

☐ Yes

Not the best choice. Though it's true that Guy is the Chinese company's customer, scheduling all conferences and meetings at times inconvenient to them isn't fair and could cause resentment. Instead, he and his contacts at the Chinese company should share such inconvenience equally.

☐ No

Correct choice. Though it's true that Guy is the Chinese company's customer, scheduling all conferences and meetings at times inconvenient to them isn't fair and could cause resentment. Instead, he and his contacts at the Chinese company should share such inconvenience equally.

Clarify assumptions regarding when it is considered acceptable to conduct business and take part in phone or online meetings.

☐ Yes

Correct choice. Clarifying such assumptions is essential to managing the time-zone differences that will be at hand in this collaboration. For example, Guy needs to find out if it's OK to phone his contacts at the Chinese company during their evening or weekend hours to discuss the project and to let them know when he is open to taking part in meetings. He should also ask them whether their company will remain open during upcoming major holidays (such as the Chinese New Year). Any plant shutdowns for holidays could seriously affect the project schedule.

☐ No

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Find out as much as he can about how manufacturing companies in China typically do business.

☐ Yes

Correct choice. In a global collaboration, participants can sometimes suffer from a lack of knowledge about one another's ways of conducting business or carrying out tasks and processes. These "mutual knowledge gaps" can create misunderstandings and confusion over how the project will proceed. For example, the Chinese manufacturer may have to obtain special licenses or permits to export finished product to its clients. The time

needed to fulfill these and other requirements could affect the schedule for Guy's project, so he should clarify them as soon as possible.

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Team alignment challenges



Have you been asked to manage a global team—members are in different countries but rely on each other to accomplish the same goal? Perhaps your team is charged with developing a new product, solving a customer's problem, or implementing a new IT platform.

Whatever your global team's charter, you'll face greater challenges than if everyone on your team shared the same time zone. Geographic distance, language barriers, cultural differences—these can fracture your team, preventing it from achieving its mission.

In particular, a global team can fall prey to these alignment problems:

- **Undetected conflict.** Imperfect communication technology can make it difficult for team members to address the normal misunderstandings that arise in any team (such as disagreements over strategies and contests over resources). In fact, conflicts tend to go undetected and unresolved longer in a global team than in a traditional team.
- **"Us versus them" divisions.** When something goes wrong in a global team—a conflict, a crisis—members tend to split up along national lines. Team members from one country may blame their colleagues in another country for the problem. They tend to view their compatriots as more like them and thus smarter or more competent. And they may view members from other countries as

different from, and therefore less capable than, themselves. Stereotyping and ethnocentrism can result.

Four strategies for aligning your team

How to correct misalignment in your global team? Apply the following four strategies:

- Foster a sense of shared identity
- Create a strong sense of purpose
- Align roles and responsibilities
- Establish decision-making protocols

Continue reading to learn more about these strategies.

Foster a sense of shared identity

How to prevent the misalignment problems—competition, “us versus them” divisiveness, confusion over roles—that can tear a global team apart? Foster a sense of shared identity by giving all subgroups equal input into decisions, keeping team sizes relatively consistent, and leading meetings from different subgroups’ home bases.

Frequent communication, whether through face-to-face meetings, real-time virtual conversations, or Web-based discussion threads, also goes a long way toward building a common identity.

Global team members with a shared identity view themselves as part of a larger entity that transcends national differences.

Create a strong sense of purpose

“Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”
—Vince Lombardi

You can further align members of your global team by creating a strong sense of purpose. To do so, work to build consensus among all team members on the following:

- **Vision:** A compelling picture of an achievable, highly desired future. For example, “Our team’s accomplishments will enable our company to claim the largest market share in our industry within Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.”
- **Mission:** A simple statement of what your global team does. For instance, “We develop products that make life better for consumers around the globe.”
- **Goals:** Targets that translate the team’s vision and mission into measurable results. To illustrate, “Our team will develop three blockbuster products by the end of next year.”
- **Tasks:** Actions (such as designing product features, developing prototypes for market testing, and researching competing products) that team members will need to take to achieve the agreed-upon goals.

Align roles and responsibilities

The likelihood that roles and responsibilities will overlap rises exponentially in a global team. For example, several subgroups within your global team may assume that they're responsible for determining which product lines should be extended and which should not. Role overlap creates time-wasting confusion and conflict.

To avoid overlap, openly discuss everyone's assumptions about who's responsible for what. Then redefine roles and responsibilities to address any overlap.

Also consider allocating leadership roles fluidly, according to the challenges at hand. For example, people with the expertise and technical skills essential for carrying out specific tasks could serve in leadership roles when those tasks become priorities for the team. Members who excel at handling social challenges (such as fostering group identity or resolving interpersonal conflicts) could take on leadership roles when those situations arise.

Establish decision-making protocols

Uncertainty about how decisions will be made and who will make which decisions can spark further conflict, confusion, and competition within a global team. To avoid this scenario, work with your global team members to establish decision-making protocols:

- List all the decisions the team will need to make and group them into categories, such as “staffing,” “budget,” “marketing,” “product launch timelines,” and so forth.
- For each category, determine how decisions for that category will be made. Be aware of differences in decision-making norms across cultures. For instance, in some cultures, people strongly prefer to make decisions by consensus; in others, the preference is for unilateral decision making. Compromise as needed so that people are as comfortable as possible.
- Determine who specifically will be making each type of decision. For instance, will strategic-level decisions be made by the full team, while lower-level decisions will be made by certain subgroups?
- Impose rules of engagement regarding decisions. For example, once a decision is made, there will be no second-guessing it—or trying to get around it.

Overview

This section provides interactive exercises so you can practice what you've learned. These exercises are self-checks only; your answers will not be used to evaluate your performance in the topic.

Scenario

Assume the role of a manager in a fictional situation and explore different outcomes based on your choices (5-10 minutes).

Check Your Knowledge

Assess your understanding of key points by completing a 10-question quiz (10 minutes).

Scenario: Part 1

Part 1

Meet Josef. He's a brand manager for Allia Group, a multinational consumer products company headquartered in Chicago. Josef works with Allia's health and beauty aids product lines and manages the company's Get Fresh botanicals-based soap brand.

Allia has set aggressive growth goals, including increasing market share for its products in Asia and Europe. To that end, executives have challenged the division's brand managers to develop innovative marketing campaigns for their products.

Josef assembles a new global team to craft a marketing strategy for Get Fresh within three months. The team comprises Allia market researchers, sales managers, and product developers. Most members work at the firm's U.S. headquarters, while several others are located at Allia's European and Asian offices.

Josef holds a teleconference to launch the project. He suggests creating a Web site on which team members can post project updates, share ideas, and learn about one another's expertise. He also suggests meeting by phone every Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time to address project problems.

Everyone seems excited. But during the weekly phone meetings, the U.S. team members dominate the conversation. And after several weeks, a few members from the overseas offices stop attending the meetings regularly. Josef wonders what to do.

What might Josef do about the overseas team members' lukewarm participation?

- Clarify the vision and mission that the team is striving to fulfill, as well as its goals the tasks needed to reach them.

Correct choice.

The fact that the U.S. members of Josef's team are dominating meetings and that several other members aren't participating as much as they should be suggests that the team is falling prey to common problems. These problems can include a tendency to identify with a country instead of with the team as a whole, language barriers, and time-zone differences. By clarifying vision, mission, goals, and tasks, Josef would create a strong sense of purpose for the team—which would encourage everyone to work together more effectively.

- Increase communication by having team members use e-mail more and copy all members on any messages sent.

Not the best choice.

Though Josef's intent to increase communication is a good one, this isn't the best way to do so. When global teams copy

everyone on each e-mail message, members can become overwhelmed and may start deleting messages without reading them. Using e-mail this way can also create problems with version control: People lose track of which document version is the latest and may make changes to the wrong versions.

A better way of increasing communication would be to insist that team members use the special Web site to stay in frequent contact and exchange messages. Such online "team rooms" can be accessed by all members, at any time.

- **Hold Monday phone meetings an hour earlier, so Asian team members don't have to participate so late in their day.**

Not the best choice.

Even if the Monday meetings are held at 7:00 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time, some team members in Asia may be 14 or 15 hours ahead—they're dialing in as late as 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. With team members dispersed so widely geographically, some members will always be inconvenienced, no matter what time a meeting is held. However, it's not fair to ask the same members to always be inconvenienced by time-zone differences.

Josef should arrange meeting times so team members share the burden of being inconvenienced. For example, a meeting held at 4:00 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time would be 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. in some parts of Asia. No one likes to talk on the phone very early or very late in the day, but if team members know that everyone's taking turns calling in at inconvenient times, they may feel a greater sense of team identity and may participate more.

Scenario: Part 2

Part 2

Josef makes a few adjustments that increase all team members' participation in the Get Fresh project. At the end of the three months, the team has created an exciting new marketing strategy for the brand. The strategy includes developing extensions of the Get Fresh product that use botanicals and other ingredients local to the regions HBA has targeted for market-share growth.

Josef wants to create print and broadcast advertisements showcasing these local ingredients as well as renowned places in the target markets (such as famous buildings or natural structures). He decides to outsource photography for the ads to agencies based in the target regions. These agencies know the locations and consumers in the target markets and charge less than U.S. agencies.

Josef schedules a phone conference with the photography team from one agency—Grimaldi Enterprise, headquartered in Rome—to discuss the project. Grimaldi usually serves local companies but wants more overseas clients.

The call is conducted in English. Josef soon realizes that the photographers have limited command of English. He and they are having difficulty understanding one another. At one point, he hears them switch to Italian for a few moments.

Josef really wants to do business with Grimaldi, but wonders whether the language barrier might be too high.

How might Josef best address the language difficulties he's experiencing with Grimaldi?

- Hire an interpreter to help each side improve communication during the phone conferences.

Not the best choice.

Sometimes hiring an interpreter is unavoidable, especially if participants don't speak one another's languages at all. However, interpreters don't always accurately capture what's being said, which can introduce new language problems. Since the Grimaldi employees do speak some English, Josef should find another solution to the language issues he and they are experiencing.

- Simplify his vocabulary, avoid acronyms and jargon, and ask the photographers to paraphrase what he has said.

Correct choice.

In a global collaboration where there are different levels of proficiency in the common business language, native speakers of that language can take steps to help non-native speakers understand them. If you're a native speaker, these steps include simplifying your vocabulary, avoiding acronyms and technical jargon, and asking non-native speakers to paraphrase what you've said to make sure that they've understood you. Additional steps include speaking more slowly and rephrasing a comment in several different ways to help non-native speakers grasp your meaning.

- When one of them says something Josef doesn't understand, ask her to repeat herself.

Correct choice.

While Josef should take steps to help the Italian photographers understand him, he can also take steps to understand *them* better. These include asking them to repeat themselves if he didn't understand something they said, as well as paraphrasing

what he thinks they've said to check his own understanding. By modeling these behaviors, Josef may encourage the photographers to adopt similar behaviors that can help overcome the language barrier.

In global collaborations where participants have different levels of proficiency in the common business language, native *and* non-native speakers must work together to help each other move past any anxieties or frustrations and to increase understanding.

Scenario: Part 3

Part 3

Josef takes steps to overcome the language barrier between him and the Grimaldi photographers, and the collaboration moves forward smoothly and productively. Meanwhile, Josef has also enlisted a team of designers at Allia's Mumbai office to develop new packaging for Get Fresh as part of the marketing strategy for the brand. He schedules a two-week trip to Mumbai to meet with the team in person and to help them put that part of the project into action.

On his first day in the Mumbai office, he notices something that he finds odd: The designers, as a group, are taking frequent breaks throughout the day—relaxing in the break room, chatting, and sipping tea. Though they stay at the office later than most of Josef's colleagues back in the United States do, Josef can't help thinking, "We're here to work, not relax!" He wonders how the Mumbai team will ever carry out their part of the project on time if they're constantly taking breaks. But he's not sure what to do about the situation.

How should Josef deal with the situation in the Mumbai office?

- Ask his colleagues there to take fewer or shorter breaks, so they can free up more time to devote to the project.

Not the best choice.

The behavior of the designers in Mumbai suggests that they are from a national culture that has different perceptions of time and different ways of approaching their work than what Josef is used to in his culture. By asking them to change their behavior, Josef risks causing offense, which could hurt the team's productivity. He needs to take a different approach.

- Do nothing. If he complains, he may catalyze tensions, which would decrease the team's productivity even further.

Not the best choice.

Josef has real concerns about the project's fate, so doing nothing is not a good option. Moreover, doing nothing would deprive him of the opportunity to learn more about his colleagues. Judging from their behavior, they come from a national culture that has different perceptions of time and ways of working than what Josef is familiar with. Instead of doing nothing, he should take steps to learn more about those differences.

- Join his colleagues in the break room on a couple of occasions and observe what they're doing and saying.

Correct choice.

Josef's colleagues in Mumbai view time and work processes differently than he does, and these differences stem in part from their national culture. Josef should take the opportunity to learn more about the cultural distinctions in play, so he can determine how to work most productively with his colleagues. Joining them on a couple of their breaks and observing them would be an excellent start.

Scenario: Conclusion

Conclusion

The next time Josef sees the Mumbai designers heading down the hall together toward the break room, he follows them in. He notices several senior managers trickling in, too. Everyone fills a mug with tea and settles into chairs around large, round tables. Josef selects a chair and asks if it's OK to join in. They smile and welcome him.

As everyone starts chatting, Josef is surprised to see that they're not talking about their weekend, their families, or some other nonwork matter. Instead, they're discussing work projects in lengthy detail. In addition, it appears that the senior managers are mentoring and coaching the more junior employees—helping them solve work-related problems and exploring ideas for developing their skills.

Josef realizes that the group mentoring and coaching taking place in the break room isn't eroding the designers' productivity at all. It's actually enhancing it—by fostering the exchange of knowledge and professional development essential for a team's productivity. At the end of the break, he returns to his station feeling much more relaxed about the project's fate.

As a brand manager for Allia, Josef has grappled with numerous challenges that can arise in global collaborations. He has learned how to lead a geographically dispersed team, how to deal with language barriers, and how to navigate differences in national cultures. Thanks to these experiences, he has become a more seasoned and effective global manager.

Activity: Check Your Knowledge: Question 1

Who in an organization should be held primarily responsible for knowing how to collaborate globally?

- [Country managers](#)

Not the best choice.

All managers at every level in an organization (not just country managers) should know how to collaborate globally. That's because most managers, in their day-to-day work, increasingly must collaborate with people and organizations from other countries to reach important goals. Examples of global collaborations include working with vendors in other countries, marketing or selling products and services to customers in other countries, and working with companies in other countries (such as setting up a strategic alliance). Managers must know how to navigate all of these types of global collaborations.

- [All managers](#)

Correct choice.

All managers at every level in an organization should know how to collaborate globally. That's because most managers, in their day-to-day work, increasingly must collaborate with people and organizations from other countries to reach important goals. Examples of global collaborations include working with vendors in other countries, marketing or selling products and services to customers in other countries, and working with companies in other countries (such as setting up a strategic alliance). Managers must know how to navigate all of these types of global collaborations.

- [Employees on temporary overseas assignments](#)

Not the best choice.

All managers at every level in an organization (not just employees on temporary overseas assignments) should know how to collaborate globally. That's because most managers, in their day-to-day work, increasingly must collaborate with people and organizations from other countries to reach important goals. Examples of global collaborations include working with vendors in other countries, marketing or selling products and services to customers in other countries, and working with companies in other countries (such as setting up a strategic alliance). Managers must know how to navigate all of these types of global collaborations.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 2

Which of the following are *not* dimensions that Dutch management scholar Geert Hofstede identified in his framework for describing national cultures?

- [Individualism/Collectivism and Low Power Distance/High Power Distance](#)

Not the best choice.

These actually *are* dimensions that Hofstede identified in his framework. Additional dimensions are Low Uncertainty Avoidance/High Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculine/Feminine, and Long-Term

Orientation/Short-Term Orientation. Hofstede's dimensions do not include High Achievement/Low Achievement and Socialist/Capitalist.

- [High Achievement/Low Achievement and Socialist/Capitalist](#)

Correct choice.

Hofstede's dimensions do not include High Achievement/Low Achievement and Socialist/Capitalist. The dimensions in his framework are: Individualism/Collectivism, Low Power Distance/High Power Distance, Low Uncertainty Avoidance/High Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculine/Feminine, and Long-Term Orientation/Short-Term Orientation.

- [Long-Term Orientation/Short-Term Orientation and Masculine/Feminine](#)

Not the best choice.

These actually *are* dimensions that Hofstede identified in his framework. Additional dimensions are Individualism/Collectivism, Low Power Distance/High Power Distance, and Low Uncertainty Avoidance/High Uncertainty Avoidance. Hofstede's dimensions do not include High Achievement/Low Achievement and Socialist/Capitalist.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 3

Suppose you're overseeing the work of Jin, an overseas employee who lives in a high power distance culture. Which of the following behaviors might you expect Jin to demonstrate?

- [Jin frequently offers his ideas to you and expresses any concerns he has about his job responsibilities.](#)

Not the best choice.

Freely offering ideas and expressing concerns are not behavioral characteristics of people who come from a high power distance culture. The behaviors you would most likely expect from Jin are that he would wait for you to issue directives, and then he would follow them. In high power distance cultures, people tend to perceive a wide gap between individuals who are at different hierarchical levels. They behave differently with someone depending on how much power the person has relative to their own.

- [Jin waits for you to issue directives, and then he follows them.](#)

Correct choice.

Waiting for and following direction is a behavioral characteristic of people who come from a high power distance culture. In such cultures, people tend to perceive a wide gap between individuals who are at different hierarchical levels. They behave differently with someone depending on how much power the person has relative to their own.

- [Jin shows deference to the team members he's working with.](#)

Not the best choice.

Showing deference to people at the same level in an organization's hierarchy is not a behavioral characteristic of people who come from a high power distance culture. The behaviors you would most likely expect from Jin are that he would wait for you to issue directives, and then he would follow them. In high power distance cultures, people tend to perceive a wide gap between individuals who are at different hierarchical levels. They behave differently with someone depending on how much power the person has relative to their own.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 4

Cultural intelligence includes the ability to:

- Persuade people from another culture to adopt customs and habits common in your culture.

Not the best choice.

Cultural intelligence includes the ability to determine how the ways in which people from a specific country interact differ from how people interact in your home country. It also includes the ability to assess the ways people in one country commonly interact and to successfully manage an unsettling or unfamiliar situation you encounter with someone from another country.

- Gather information about another country that is classified or otherwise protected by law.

Not the best choice.

Cultural intelligence includes the ability to determine how the ways in which people from a specific country interact differ from how people interact in your home country. It also includes the ability to assess the ways people in one country commonly interact and to successfully manage an unsettling or unfamiliar situation you encounter with someone from another country.

- Determine how the ways in which people from a specific country interact differ from how people interact in your home country.

Correct choice.

In addition to this ability, cultural intelligence includes the ability to assess the ways people in one country commonly interact and to successfully manage an unsettling or unfamiliar situation you encounter with someone from another country.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 5

Dina has assembled a global team tasked with improving a key business process in her organization. During the kick-off meeting for the project, she takes time to describe each team member's accomplishments, skills, and areas of expertise. By providing these descriptions, she is seeking to:

- Establish trust between members of the team.

Correct choice.

Confidence in the skills and talents of fellow participants in a global collaboration is a crucial component of trust. Everyone involved in the collaboration wants to know that the other participants have the competencies needed to get the job done. An effective leader of a global team will take every opportunity to make members aware of one another's talents and to express appreciation for those talents.

- Encourage spirited competition between team members for task assignments.

Not the best choice.

By describing team members' competencies and talents, Dina is seeking to establish trust between the members. Confidence in the skills and talents of fellow participants in any global collaboration is a crucial component of trust. Everyone involved in the collaboration wants to know that the other participants have the competencies needed to get the job done. An effective leader of a global team will take every opportunity to make members aware of one another's talents and to express appreciation for those talents.

- Provide an opportunity for team members to constructively critique one another's skills.

Not the best choice.

By describing team members' competencies and talents, Dina is seeking to establish trust between the members. Confidence in the skills and talents of fellow participants in any global collaboration is a crucial component of trust. Everyone involved in the collaboration wants to know that the other participants have the competencies needed to get the job done. An effective leader of a global team will take every opportunity to make members aware of one another's talents and to express appreciation for those talents.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 6

Benicio is about to negotiate contract terms with a vendor located in a country where people strive for consensus among group members before arriving at final agreements. In the vendor's country, organizational hierarchies are fluid rather than rigid. And Benicio has already noticed that his counterparts freely communicate about their priorities and interests. Which of the following approaches would you advise Benicio to use in this negotiation?

- Gain concessions by appealing to the vendor's sense of status and asking for their help.

Not the best choice.

This tactic would best be used if Benicio were negotiating with people who come from a culture characterized by rigid hierarchy and who have high perceived status compared with his company. Instead, Benicio should be prepared to provide information repeatedly, in great detail, and in different forms. That's because negotiators who require consensus before making decisions tend to want extensive information. In addition to providing the information, Benicio should accept that the negotiation is going to take more time than if he were dealing with counterparts who tend to make decisions by themselves.

- Present a series of proposals, and then observe his counterparts' reactions to gain insights into their priorities and interests.

Not the best choice.

This tactic would be best used if Benicio were negotiating with people who don't offer much information about their priorities and interests. Instead, Benicio should be prepared to provide information repeatedly, in great detail, and in different forms. That's because negotiators who require consensus before making decisions tend to want extensive information. In addition to providing the information, Benicio should accept that the negotiation is going to take more time than if he were dealing with counterparts who tend to make decisions by themselves.

- Be prepared to provide information repeatedly, in great detail, and in different forms.

Correct choice.

Negotiators who require consensus before making decisions tend to want extensive information. Benicio should be prepared to provide it. He should also accept that the negotiation is going to take more time than if he were dealing with counterparts who tend to make decisions by themselves.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 7

You're taking part in a phone conference with individuals from another country who are not native speakers of the common business language you're using. Which of the following actions would you take to help the non-native speakers understand you?

- Increase the volume of your voice.

Not the best choice.

Talking more loudly won't help non-native speakers of the common business language understand you. Indeed, increasing the volume of your voice may annoy or offend them. Instead, you should slow down the pace of your speaking, which gives non-native speakers time to grasp what you're saying.

- Slow down the pace of your speaking.

Correct choice.

By speaking slowly, you give non-native speakers of your language time to grasp what you're saying.

- Deliberately make mistakes to show that you don't expect them to have perfect command of the language.

Not the best choice.

Deliberately making mistakes in the common business language won't help non-native speakers understand you. Instead, you should slow down the pace of your speaking, which gives non-native speakers time to grasp what you're saying.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 8

You're collaborating with people from widely dispersed time zones—some are located several continents apart from each other. Which of the following actions could you take to deal with the difficulties presented by physical distance between collaborators?

- Ask all participants in the collaboration to communicate primarily by instant messaging.

Not the best choice.

Though instant messaging can be a convenient communication technology, it is most effective when people are working the same hours. In a widely geographically dispersed team, it's not likely that collaborators will all be working during the same times.

Instead, you should consider creating a shared online workspace for the collaboration. This secure space would be accessible around the clock by users who have permission to access the site. On their own time, they can post updates on their parts of the collaboration, conduct online discussions about the project, and examine one another's postings in preparation for a virtual meeting. Some shared online workspaces have several "walls" devoted to particular aspects of the collaboration—such as participants' contact information and areas of expertise; the collaboration's mission, goals, and required tasks; and notices of when virtual meetings and conference calls are being held and showing minutes from meetings.

- Establish a consistent time for weekly phone or Web conferences that inconveniences the fewest possible participants in the collaboration.

Not the best choice.

When you're working with group of collaborators who are widely dispersed geographically, someone is always going to be severely inconvenienced no matter what time a phone or Web conference is held. If you conduct such conferences at the same time each week, the collaborators who are most inconvenienced are likely to become resentful.

Instead, change the meeting time so that everyone shares the inconvenience equally. Also consider creating a shared online workspace for the collaboration. This secure space would be accessible around the clock by users who have permission to access the site. On their own time, they can post updates on their parts of the collaboration, conduct online discussions about the project, and examine one another's postings in preparation for a virtual meeting. Some shared online workspaces have several "walls" devoted to particular aspects of the collaboration—such as participants' contact information and areas of expertise; the collaboration's mission, goals, and required tasks; and notices of when virtual meetings and conference calls are being held and showing minutes from meetings.

- Create a shared online workspace for the collaboration.

Correct choice.

A shared online workspace is a secure space that is accessible around the clock by users who have permission to access the site. On their own time, they can post updates on their parts of the collaboration, conduct online discussions about the project, and examine one another's postings in preparation for a virtual meeting.

Some shared online workspaces even have several “walls” devoted to particular aspects of the collaboration. For example, one wall documents participants’ contact information and areas of expertise. Another states the collaboration’s mission, goals, and required tasks. And a third presents notices of when virtual meetings and conference calls are being held and shows minutes from meetings.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 9

Which of the following statements is true about communication technologies used by global collaborators?

- Excessive e-mailing can result in collaborators’ working from different versions of a crucial document.

Correct choice.

If collaborators lose control over circulation of crucial documents through excessive e-mailing, they may each end up working from different versions of the same document—spawning errors and confusion.

- Instant messaging is especially effective when people are working different hours.

Not the best choice.

This statement is *not* true. Instant messaging is actually effective only if people are working the same hours, not different hours. A statement that *is* true about communication technologies is that excessive e-mailing can result in collaborators’ working from different versions of a crucial document if they lose control of circulation of such documents.

- Web-based conferencing tools have no limitations.

Not the best choice.

This statement is *not* true. While Web-conferencing tools have useful features (such as text chat, a whiteboard for brainstorming, and application sharing), they also have limitations. For example, audio quality can be poor, and technical and firewall problems can crop up. A statement that *is* true about communication technologies is that excessive e-mailing can result in collaborators’ working from different versions of a crucial document if they lose control of circulation of such documents.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 10

You’re leading a globally dispersed team and want to create a strong sense of purpose between team members. Which of the following actions would best help you achieve this goal?

- Lead meetings from different subgroups’ home bases.

Not the best choice.

This is something you would do to help foster a sense of shared identity in your team. To create a strong sense of purpose, you would build consensus on the team's vision (a compelling picture of an achievable, highly desired future), mission (what the team will do), goals (targets translating the vision and mission into measurable results), and tasks (actions that must be carried out to achieve the goals).

- **Openly discuss which team members are responsible for which tasks and responsibilities.**

Not the best choice.

This is something you would do to align roles and responsibilities in your team. To create a strong sense of purpose, you would build consensus on the team's vision (a compelling picture of an achievable, highly desired future), mission (what the team will do), goals (targets translating the vision and mission into measurable results), and tasks (actions that must be carried out to achieve the goals).

- **Build consensus on the team's vision, mission, goals, and tasks.**

Correct choice.

Clarifying the team's vision (a compelling picture of an achievable, highly desired future), mission (what the team will do), goals (targets translating the vision and mission into measurable results), and tasks (actions that must be carried out to achieve the goals) can help you create a strong sense of purpose in a global team.

Check Your Knowledge: Results

Your score:

Steps for mastering another culture's customs

1. Diagnose the other culture's behaviors.

Identify the range of behaviors expected in another country in specific situations. For example, how do businesspeople in that country network with one another? How do they negotiate? How do they show respect?

2. Practice the expected behaviors.

Try your hand at demonstrating these expected behaviors in real-world situations over several weeks. For instance, during a short elevator ride with representatives from your target culture, experiment with a new style of networking.

3. Reflect on the emotions.

Acknowledge the uncomfortable emotions that these practice experiences bring to the surface. For example, mirroring another culture's customs may feel highly unnatural or even embarrassing at first.

4. Identify strategies you can use to cope with these feelings.

For instance, some people pretend that they're acting in a play to deal with uncomfortable emotions they experience while practicing new behaviors.

5. Obtain feedback.

Get feedback from a native-born cultural expert on your progress toward mastering new behaviors and customs.

Steps for building trust between global collaborators

1. Encourage face-to-face contact.

If at all possible, have everyone involved in a global collaboration meet in person to launch the effort. If a face-to-face meeting isn't possible, create an online roster showing a photo of each participant in the collaboration; brief descriptions of participants' backgrounds, interests, and skills; and participants' contact information.

2. Set clear goals and expectations.

Early in the collaboration, explicitly discuss what you want to accomplish together and how you'll know you've achieved your goals.

3. Make the collaboration's work visible.

Document progress as the collaboration moves forward. Also document lessons learned and best practices identified by collaborators as they work together.

4. Provide ongoing feedback.

Through e-mails, phone calls, and other communications, keep collaborators informed about what's going well and what isn't.

5. Showcase collaborators' competence.

By pointing out each collaborator's achievements and expertise, you'll help all participants gain confidence in one another's ability to get the job done.

6. Foster cultural understanding.

Acknowledge cultural differences that are creating tensions or misunderstandings. For instance, some participants in a global collaboration may send short e-mails that immediately address the task at hand. Others may view this as rude. Help people adjust to differences; for example, by asking get-right-to-the-point types to use a few pleasantries at the beginnings of their e-mails.

Steps for conducting a cross-cultural negotiation

1. Define "success" for you.

Decide what a successful outcome would look like to you. For example, if you're negotiating a deal with an overseas vendor, a successful outcome might include a specific date for work completion and an agreed-upon quality standard.

2. Imagine what “success” would mean for the other party.

Accept that “success” may not mean the same thing to your negotiation counterpart as it does to you. Try to envision how the other person would define a successful outcome. Consider what this might imply for the proposals and terms explored during the negotiation.

3. Assess decision-making styles.

Participants in the negotiation may have very different decision-making styles. For example, some may make decisions by themselves, which enables them to respond to proposals quickly. Others might make decisions by consensus, which means they'll need more time.

4. Establish common ground.

Look for anything you and the other person might have in common—favorite movies, hobbies, sports, music. Being able to share something can help you get past the “people” problems (such as misunderstandings that lead to mistrust) that often arise during a cross-cultural negotiation.

5. Master a problem-solving approach to the negotiation.

Negotiators who use this approach take a broad view of the potential deal, attempting to get as much as they can without presenting a proposal that would drive the other party away from the bargaining table. They establish common ground wherever they can find it. And they approach negotiations on a step-by-step basis.

6. Learn the other culture's negotiation rituals.

For instance, do people from that culture engage in extensive analysis of facts and figures early in a negotiation to build confidence and display trustworthiness? Do they invest time in building relationships first, and then move to discussing details of the deal?

7. Don't lose sight of the individual.

While understanding another culture's negotiation rituals is important, don't focus *so* much on those rituals that you lose sight of your counterpart as an individual. People who come from the same culture don't always behave and think identically in every situation. Treat the individual's culture as background, but also learn as much as you can about his or her personality and communication style.

Steps for aligning roles and responsibilities in your global team

1. Assess team members' clarity about their own roles.

Ask each team member, “How clear are you about your role and responsibilities on the team?”

2. Assess their clarity about other team members' roles.

Ask each team member this question: “How clear are you about the other team members’ roles and responsibilities?”

3. Have team members define their jobs.

One at a time, ask each team member to define his or her job for the rest of the group, including the activities the person will carry out and the results he or she is responsible for.

4. Have other team members comment.

After each team member defines his or her job for the group, ask others, “Do you agree with what the team member just said? Do you have a different perception of this person’s role and responsibilities?” Use the resulting discussion to identify overlaps and disconnects.

5. Address any overlaps or disconnects.

Redefine team members’ roles and responsibilities to address any overlaps and disconnects. For example, if several subgroups in a product development team have been assuming that they will be handling market research, determine which subgroup could be given a different set of responsibilities.

Tips for strengthening your cultural intelligence

- Use your “heart.” Commit to seeking to understand cultures different from yours. Have the confidence to know you *can* understand them. And be willing to try again if you make a cultural mistake during a global collaboration.
- Use your “head.” Observe people from other cultures, looking for clues to their shared understandings and customs.
- Use your “body.” Modify your behaviors and demeanors to show that you have to some extent entered the world of people you’re collaborating with globally.
- Educate yourself. Take every opportunity to read books, watch documentaries, and attend workshops or courses on the culture of a country where someone you’ll be collaborating with was raised.

Tips for hiring and working with an interpreter

- While speaking through an interpreter in a face-to-face meeting, engage your counterpart directly—looking at him while he’s speaking and while you’re speaking to him. Don’t turn and face the interpreter while you converse.
- Expect that you’ll need about twice as long as usual to conduct a conversation using an interpreter. Plan for the extra time.
- Avoid activities, such as brainstorming, that involve many people talking at once.
- Avoid using humor; it can be very hard to grasp cross-culturally.
- Agree to a few ground rules and procedures with your interpreter ahead of time. For example, ask him or her not to answer questions for you during the conversation with your counterpart.
- If the conversation with your counterpart includes difficult or sensitive topics, such as ethics issues, ask the interpreter not to “sanitize” your message or to revise it to be culturally or politically correct.

Tips for communicating with non-native speakers of your language

- Slow down your speaking pace.
- Use basic vocabulary.
- Occasionally ask the other person to paraphrase what you have said.
- Avoid colloquial expressions, jargon, and slang.
- Avoid made-up product names, acronyms, and initials.
- Pretest jokes with someone who knows the culture of the individuals you'll be speaking with.
- Expect delayed reactions, since non-native speakers will need time to understand what you're saying and decide how to respond.
- Test business imagery and metaphors with your listener; for example, "In my country, we do business like farmers—we carefully plow, plant, and water, and hope for many harvests from the same field." Then ask the other person to share his or her culture's imagery and metaphors: "How do you see doing business in your country?"

Tips for fostering shared identity in your global team

- Watch subgroup size. Ensure that team subgroups operating in different countries do not differ dramatically in size. When subgroups differ significantly in size, the larger groups' members may view themselves as more "important" than the smaller groups.
- Avoid inequities. Make sure no subgroups are working much longer hours, have less interesting tasks, or have significantly less say in team meetings than others. Inequities of these types can stir resentment and intensify "us versus them" feelings.
- Lead meetings from different locations. You'll send the message that no subgroup is more important than any other.
- Encourage frequent communication. Hold a kick-off meeting using an online team room. Have all members visit the team room daily. Follow up with weekly teleconferences or Web conferences. Between meetings, talk with members individually, on the phone or face-to-face.

Tips for creating a high-performance global team

- Clarify "what's in it for me." Ask team members to complete the sentence "The one thing that would make it worthwhile for me to be a member of this team is . . ." People won't collaborate unless they see a good reason to do so. By encouraging them to envision "what's in it for me," you foster collaboration in your global team.
- Define "trust." Get team members to spell out what "trust" means to each of them. Examples might include, "If I send an e-mail asking for something immediately, the recipient gets back to me in three hours or lets me know why he can't" or "My teammates will tell me if they have concerns about my work."
- Determine roles. Early in the formation of your team, define critical roles (such as facilitating group discussions or updating members who've been traveling). Decide who should handle each of those roles.
- Establish information-sharing protocols. Ask team members their preferences in regard to the various technologies the group will be using—e-mail, phone calls, videoconferencing, Web conferencing, instant messaging. Agree on protocols for each technology.

Worksheet for documenting cultural characteristics

<i>Worksheet for Documenting Cultural Characteristics</i>	
<p>Use this worksheet to learn about and document characteristics of the culture of someone with whom you'll be collaborating. By documenting what you know about that country's culture, you can better prepare to interact with your counterpart during the collaboration.</p> <p>If your global collaboration will involve people from several different countries, fill out one of these forms for each country involved.</p>	
Part I: Collaboration Specifics	
Time frame of collaboration:	
My collaborator's name:	
Collaborator's home country:	
Purpose of collaboration:	
Cultural information sources to consult:	
Part II: Document Your Findings	
<p>In the sections below, document what you learn about how people in your collaborator's home country handle the following activities:</p>	
Greeting new business associates	Making decisions

National culture self-assessment

National Culture Self-Assessment

Use this self-assessment to consider where your national culture might fall along the five dimensions identified by Geert Hofstede. **Note:** This self-assessment is adapted from Hofstede's definitions and descriptions of five continua. It is not meant to diagnose a national culture but to encourage you to think more critically about your own national culture and to consider how it might differ from others.

Part One: Mapping Your National Culture

Instructions: For each dimension below, examine the pairs of descriptions of attitudes, preferences, and values. For each pair, fill in the circle that best represents where you think your national culture fits along that dimension.

Example: Under the Individualism/Collectivism dimension, if you think that the description "Enjoy achieving things by themselves" strongly describes people in your country, fill in the square closest to the statement. If you think the phrase "Enjoy achieving things as members of a group" strongly describes people in your country, fill in the square closest to that statement. If you think people in your country fall somewhere in the middle, choose the square that best represents the extent to which you think your national culture leans toward either statement.

Individualism	←		→	Collectivism
Enjoy achieving things by themselves		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enjoy achieving things as members of a group
Assert their individual rights even if doing so means causing conflict		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appreciate peace, harmony, and absence of conflict
Value being free of group obligations		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take pleasure in carrying out obligations and duties to other members of their group
Low Power Distance	←		→	High Power Distance
Perceive no gap between people at different levels in an organization's hierarchy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perceive a wide gap between people at different levels in an organization's hierarchy
Don't care who has more power than whom		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care very much about who has more power than whom
Don't hesitate to challenge those who are in higher positions of power		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid challenging those who are in higher positions of power

Worksheet for documenting collaborators' talents and interests

Worksheet for Documenting Collaborators' Talents and Interests			
<p>Use this worksheet to document the competencies, expertise, achievements, and interests of each participant in a global collaboration. Gather this information by interviewing participants. Then post it to your online workspace or circulate it to all participants.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to showcase participants' talents and interests during meetings and phone or online conferences to build confidence that each person can get the job done. Awareness of one another's interests gives participants common ground when they're communicating.</p>			
COLLABORATOR Example: Janna Wirch			
Competencies	Designing product packaging, mediating disputes between designers	Achievements: professional	Designer of the Year Award, Advertising Today, 2009
Areas of expertise	Graphic and materials design		
Interests	Restoring antique aircraft, knitting, rowing	Achievements: personal	Best Restoration, Vintage Aircraft Association, 2008
COLLABORATOR			
Competencies		Achievements: professional	
Areas of expertise			
Interests		Achievements: personal	
COLLABORATOR			
Competencies		Achievements: professional	
Areas of expertise			
Interests		Achievements: personal	
COLLABORATOR			
Competencies		Achievements: professional	
Areas of expertise			
Interests		Achievements: personal	
COLLABORATOR			
Competencies		Achievements: professional	
Areas of expertise			
Interests		Achievements: personal	

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Worksheet for building trust between global collaborators

<i>Worksheet for Building Trust Between Global Collaborators</i>	
<i>Use this worksheet to define how you will build trust during your next global collaboration. Trust is critical for any global collaboration. When participants trust one another, they cooperate more and stand a better chance of surmounting the difficulties and conflicts that may arise.</i>	
1.	Briefly describe the upcoming global collaboration in which you will participate.
2.	How will you encourage face-to-face contact and personal connection between collaborators? <i>Example: Launch the effort with an in-person meeting. Create an online roster showing a photo and information about each participant.</i>
3.	How will you set clear goals and expectations? <i>Example: Hold a meeting to agree on goals and define how we'll know we've achieved them.</i>
4.	How will you make the collaboration's work visible? <i>Example: Post weekly progress reports, best practices and lessons learned on our shared online site.</i>

Worksheet for preparing for a cross-cultural negotiation

<i>Worksheet for Preparing for a Cross-Cultural Negotiation</i>
<i>Use this worksheet to establish a strong foundation for a successful cross-cultural negotiation.</i>
What is the purpose of the negotiation?
Who will be your counterpart(s) in the negotiation?
What countries do your counterparts come from?
What would a successful outcome of the negotiation look like to you?
What would a successful outcome of the negotiation look like to your counterpart(s)?
How will you build trust before starting the negotiation?

Worksheet for clarifying a global team's purpose

<i>Worksheet for Clarifying a Global Team's Purpose</i>
<i>Use this worksheet to help members of your global team develop a strong sense of purpose.</i>
What is the vision for the team? Try to express the vision in compelling terms, painting a picture of an achievable, highly desirable future. For example: "Our team's accomplishments will position our company to deliver the most cutting-edge, breakthrough products in the European and Asian markets."
What is the team's mission? Develop a simple statement of what your global team will do. For instance: "We'll develop products that will make life better for consumers around the globe."
What are the team's goals? Establish targets translating your team's vision and mission into measurable results. For example: "Our team will develop three blockbuster products by the end of this year."
What are the team's tasks? Define the actions your team will need to carry out (such as designing product features and developing prototypes for market testing) in order to achieve the agreed-upon goals and thus fulfill the team's mission and realize its vision.
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Worksheet for aligning global team roles and responsibilities

Worksheet for Aligning Global Team Roles and Responsibilities			
<i>Use this form to clarify roles and responsibilities of your global team members. Post this form on your project Web site or e-mail a copy as an attachment to all members.</i>			
Posted by:	E-mail:	Phone:	
Team Member	Role (title)	Key Responsibilities	Location

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Why Develop Others?

“At the end of the day, you bet on people, not strategies.”

Larry Bossidy

Former CEO, AlliedSignal

In today’s global business environment, markets and regulations change quickly. Competitors constantly innovate. Technological changes are the norm.

In order to outmaneuver the competition and meet the demands of the moment, organizations must be agile. They must execute flawlessly. And they must transform themselves continuously.

Are your leaders ready?

Dr. Noel M. Tichy

Professor

University of Michigan Ross School of Business

We have now entered an era where I don’t care what industry you’re in, you need leaders who can make decisions, make judgment calls at every single level. All the way down to the interface with the customer.

If you go to a company like Google or any of the high tech companies, a lot of the innovation that Amazon does is happening right at the front line. Go ahead, try it, put it out there, we'll learn from it. That cannot happen if the senior leadership doesn't have a commitment to both develop the leadership capability, but develop the business through engaging people at all levels of the organization.

Becoming a teaching organization

I like to tell parents that they cannot delegate their responsibility to develop their children. And I think it is the same in an organization. Day in and day out the person that has the biggest impact on people in the organization is the next level above and the associates around and below. And so to build a learning organization I say is not enough. Learning could be, you know we are learning cooking, we are learning this or that, but teaching organizations, when I learned something, I have a responsibility to teach my colleagues.

So everybody takes responsibility for generating new knowledge and it is not enough to be a learner, you then have to translate it into teaching.

The Virtuous Teaching Cycle

The role of a leader is to ensure that the people who work for them and around them are better every day. There's only one way to make people better. It's to teach them, learn from them, create what I call "virtuous teaching cycles", not command and control.

A virtuous teaching cycle is teach learn, teach learn. And the leader has a responsibility for reducing the hierarchy, for having a point of view to start the discussion, but then to be responsible to hear everyone's voice, get everyone involved in a disciplined way. It is not a free for all. But it is the leader's responsibility to create that virtuous teaching cycle.

A wonderful example of virtuous teaching cycle is the program that Roger Enrico ran at Pepsi, where every one of the 10 vice presidents comes with a business project.

Roger Enrico gets smarter as result of five days with 10 vice presidents, because he's learning from them. He needs to lower the hierarchy. He needs to be open to learning. And in turn, the people participating need to be energized and empowered to come up and engage in problem solving.

Another example is at Best Buy, where every morning in the stores you would bring 20 associates or so together and they would review the profit and loss statement from the day before, what we learned from the different customer segments in our stores, what we can do to improve our performance this day. And they do that every single day. The store manager was learning mostly from the associates on the floor.

That was a virtuous teaching cycle were everybody is teaching everybody, everybody is learning and the result has been an incredible result at Best Buy.

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

- Harvey S. Firestone

Founder, Firestone Tire and Rubber Co

There are clear advantages to leader-led development.

But for many leaders, taking on teaching, coaching, and other development responsibilities can seem daunting. You might avoid taking on these roles due to lack of time, resources, or your own lack of comfort with this role.

The following tips and resources can help you impart valuable learning to your team every day.

To develop others...

- Start with a Teachable Point of View

The first requirement of being able to develop other leaders is to have what I call a teachable point of view. I often give the example of, if I ran a tennis camp and you just came to day one of the tennis camp, I better have a teachable point of view on how I teach tennis. So you are standing there looking at me and it has got four elements. One, the ideas, well how do I teach the backhand, the forehand, the serve, rules of tennis. Then if I am a good tennis coach, I have a set of values. What are the right behaviors I want, how do I want you to dress, how do I want you to behave on the tennis court.

But if that's all I have, what do I do? Show you a power point presentation and then expect you to hit 500 backhands, 500 serves, run around for eight hours. I have to have a teachable point of view on emotional energy. How do I motivate you to buy in to the ideas and values?

On one end of the spectrum it could be I threaten you with corporal punishment, the other I can give you stock options, I can make you feel good about yourself, I can help you develop as a human being, what motivates you.

And then finally, how do I make the tough judgment calls, the yes/no, decisions as the tennis coach, the ball is in, the ball is out. I don't hire consultants and set up a committee, it is yes/no. And the same with running a business, what are the products, services, distribution channels, customer segments that are going to grow top line growth and profitability of the organization.

What are the values that I want everyone in the organization to have, how do I emotionally energize thousands of people, and then how do I make the yes/no, judgments on people and on business issues. So the fundamental building block of being able to develop other leaders is to have that teachable point of view just like the tennis coach.

To develop others...

- Lead with questions

Questions are hugely important because you want to create dialogue and again, what I call a virtuous teaching cycle where the teacher learns from the students and vice versa. Which means everybody ought to be free to ask whatever is on their mind, whatever it will take to get clarity and understanding, but it is not the leader just coming in and freeform asking questions. I believe the leader has a responsibility for framing the discussion, for having as best they can a teachable point of view, they may need help from their people in flushing it out, but they need to set the stage but then it has to be a very interactive, what I call virtuous teaching cycle environment, teach learn, teach learn, teach learn.

To develop others...

- Make it part of your routine

A good example to me of an outstanding leader developing other leaders is Myrtle Potter who at the time I am commenting was Chief Operating Officer of Genentech running the commercial side of the business. And she would take time at the end of every single meeting and do some coaching of the whole team on how we could perform as a team better, and then she would often take individuals and say, could we spend 10 minutes over a cup of coffee, I want to give you some feedback and coaching on that report that you just presented on or how you are handling a particularly difficult human resource issue, but it was part of her regular routine. And I think the challenge for all of us as leaders is to make that a way of life and it is built into the

fabric of how we lead and it is not a one off event, three times a year. It is happening almost every day.

To develop others...

- Make it a priority

One of the biggest challenges in getting people kind of on this path is to overcome some of their own resistance, either fear or the way I view the world I don't have time for this, everybody can make time. Roger Enrico is CEO of Pepsi. He didn't have time to go off for a week at a time and run training sessions. He had to readjust his calendar. So it requires you to look in the mirror and say, is this important. If it is important, of course I can make the time. Then I have to get over my own anxiety on how well I can do it, but it is a commitment to get on the path that says: this is how I am going to drive my own performance and the performance of my colleagues.

To develop others...

- Learn to teach

I think the biggest mistake is to assume you are going to be good at it right off the bat. It is like learning anything else. First time you go out and try and play tennis, good luck. But you got to stay with it and you got to engage your people in helping make you better and them better. And so it is a journey you need to get on, not I am going to do it perfectly when I start out.

If you want to be a great leader who is a great teacher, it's very simple. You have got to dive into the deep end of the pool. But you've got to dive into the pool with preparation. I don't want you drowning. I want you succeeding. It is extraordinarily rewarding for most human beings to teach others. I think once you can turn that switch on, it is self perpetuating. You get a lot of reinforcement, your team is better. You perform better because your performance goes up and it becomes this virtuous teaching cycle.

Your opportunity to develop others

We've heard why developing others can drive greater business results, and how to make the most of your leader-led development efforts. The materials provided in Develop Others enable you to create personalized learning experiences for YOUR team within the flow of their daily activities. Use the guides and projects to engage your team quickly. And to explore how key concepts apply to them in the context of their priorities and goals.

The value of teaching is the performance of the organization is totally dependent on making your people smarter and more aligned every day as the world changes. In the 21st century we are not going to get by with command and control. We are going to have to get by with knowledge creation. The way you create knowledge in an organization is you create these virtuous teaching cycles where you are teaching and learning simultaneously, responding to customer demands and changes, responding to changes in the global environment. My bottom line is if you're not teaching, you're not leading.

A leader's most important role in any organization is making good judgments — well informed, wise decisions about people, strategy and crises that produce the desired outcomes. When a leader shows consistently good judgment, little else matters. When he or she shows poor judgment nothing else

matters. In addition to making their own good judgment calls, good leaders develop good judgment among their team members.

Dr. Noel M. Tichy

Professor, University of Michigan Ross School of Business

Dr. Noel M. Tichy is Professor of Management and Organizations, and Director of the Global Business Partnership at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The Global Business Partnership links companies and students around the world to develop and engage business leaders to incorporate global citizenship activities, both environmental projects and human capital development, for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Previously, Noel was head of General Electric's Leadership Center at Crotonville, where he led the transformation to action learning at GE. Between 1985 and 1987, he was Manager of Management Education for GE where he directed its worldwide development efforts at Crotonville. He currently consults widely in both the private and public sectors. He is a senior partner in Action Learning Associates. Noel is author of numerous books and articles, including:

For more information about Noel Tichy, visit <http://www.noeltichy.com>.

Share an Idea

Leaders are in a unique position to recognize the ideas and tools that are most relevant and useful for their teams. If you only have a few minutes, consider sharing an idea or tool from this topic with your team or peers that is relevant and timely to their situation.

For example, consider sending one of the three recommended ideas or tools below to your team with your comments or questions on how the idea or tool can be of value to your organization. By simply sharing the item, you can easily engage others in important conversations and activities relevant to your goals and priorities.

[Raise your cultural intelligence](#)

[Steps for building trust between global collaborators](#)

[National culture self-assessment](#)

To share an idea, tip, step, or tool with your comments via e-mail, select the EMAIL link in the upper right corner of the page that contains the idea, tip, step, or tool that you wish to share.

Discussion 1: Assessing cultural differences

In today's globalized business world, your team members are probably collaborating more frequently than ever with people from other countries. For example, maybe they're participating in a virtual team comprised of colleagues working in your company's overseas offices. Or perhaps they're negotiating contract terms with vendors based in other nations. Maybe they're selling or marketing products and services to customers located in new geographic markets.

No matter what their form, global collaborations bring important benefits — such as high-performing project teams operating from all points around the globe, savings through the use of lower-cost vendors, and opportunities to expand your company's market share.

But global collaborations also present challenges — including painful and destructive misunderstandings that can arise from differences in national culture. By assessing their own national culture and that of their overseas collaborators, your team members can anticipate such misunderstandings and take

action to prevent them. The payoff? The global collaboration delivers its promised value for your company.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to assess their own and other national cultures, anticipate misunderstandings, and develop plans for preventing problems.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Assessing Cultural Differences](#)

[Discussion Guide: Assessing Cultural Differences](#)

[Discussion Slides: Assessing Cultural Differences \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

The discussion you have with your team will help them master a disciplined approach to assessing national culture, so they can avoid the misunderstandings that sabotage so many global collaborations.

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

Discussion 2: Building trust among global collaborators

The global collaborations your team is involved in — participating in far-flung virtual teams, working with overseas vendors, selling to customers in distant markets — can't deliver the promised benefits unless everyone involved trusts one another. Yet trust is one of the hardest things to achieve in a global collaboration. Why? The participants lack direct knowledge of and firsthand experience with each other.

But as hard as it might be to build trust among global collaborators, it's crucial. Without trust, collaborators don't cooperate easily, and they can't work through the inevitable problems that will arise during their work together.

Fortunately, your team members *can* learn how to establish trust with their fellow overseas collaborators by applying several powerful practices. The payoff? The global collaborations they're involved in will deliver their promised value for your company — including productive teamwork, cost savings, and expanded markets.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to foster and sustain trust with global collaborators.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Building Trust Among Global Collaborators](#)

[Discussion Guide: Building Trust Among Global Collaborators](#)

[Discussion Slides: Building Trust Among Global Collaborators \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

The discussion you have with your team will help them discover several ways to build or restore trust in an actual global collaboration they're involved in, so they can help ensure the project's success.

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

Start a Group Project

Just like any change effort, successfully incorporating new skills and behaviors into one's daily activities and habits takes time and effort. After reviewing or discussing the concepts in this topic, your direct reports will still need your support to fully apply new concepts and skills. They will need to overcome a variety of barriers including a lack of time, lack of confidence, and a fear of making mistakes. They will also need opportunities to hone their skills and break old habits. To help ensure their success, you can provide safe opportunities for individuals and your team as a whole to practice and experiment with new skills and behaviors on the job.

For example, to encourage the adoption of new norms, you can provide your team members with coaching, feedback, and additional time to complete tasks that require the use of new skills. Management approaches such as these will encourage team members to experiment with new skills until they become proficient.

Group learning projects provide another valuable technique for accelerating team members' development of new behaviors. A group learning project is an on-the-job activity aimed at providing team members with direct experience implementing their new knowledge and skills. Through a learning project, team members discover how new concepts work in the context of their situation, while simultaneously having a direct and tangible impact on the organization.

The documents below provide steps, tips, and a template for initiating a group learning project with your team, along with two project recommendations for this topic.

Download resources:

[Tips for Initiating and Supporting a Learning Project](#)

[Learning Project Plan Template](#)

[Learning Project: Prepare for a Global Collaboration](#)

[Learning Project: Prepare for a Cross-Cultural Negotiation](#)

Are Your Global Team Members Miles Apart?

Howard M. Guttman. "Are Your Global Team Members Miles Apart?" *Harvard Management Update*, February 2007.

[Download file](#)

Summary

Creating high-functioning teams is challenging under any circumstance. But when a team crosses national boundaries, time zones, and cultures, how do you meld individuals' different talents, temperaments, and communication styles? In this article, Howard M. Guttman, a consultant to Global Fortune 1000 companies, describes the three areas he and his colleagues at Guttman Development Strategies have found to be critical to creating a team whose performance transcends the limits imposed by culture and geography.

Making It Overseas

Mansour Javidan, Mary Teagarden, and David Bowen. "Making It Overseas." *Harvard Business Review*, April 2010.

[Download file](#)

Summary

The conventional wisdom holds that the best way to develop global leaders is to circulate talent through positions overseas. Expose promising managers to new cultures, the thinking goes, and they'll grow and thrive. Unfortunately, that approach isn't enough. Plenty of smart, talented executives fail spectacularly in expatriate assignments. So what does prepare people to thrive in leadership roles abroad? Years of research by the Thunderbird School of Global Management, involving more than 5,000 managers around the world, reveals that success abroad hinges on something called a global mind-set. This mind-set allows executives to cope with the challenges of working in unfamiliar cultures and helps them influence stakeholders who are unlike them. It has three main components: *intellectual capital* (global savvy, cognitive complexity, and a cosmopolitan outlook); *psychological capital* (passion for diversity, thirst for adventure, self-assurance); and *social capital* (intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact, and diplomacy). It can be measured, and it can also be measurably improved—through a development plan that focuses on building each kind of capital.

From Regional Star to Global Leader

Nitin Nohria, Katherine Tsang, Mansour Javidan, and James Champy. "From Regional Star to Global Leader." *Harvard Business Review*, January 2009.

[Download file](#)

Summary

Yang Jianguo was recently promoted from country manager for China to global head of product development at a staid French perfume maker. He was chosen for his technical smarts and his knowledge of emerging markets—a critical avenue for growth, given that sales in the company's core markets have stalled. Eager to succeed in his new role in Paris, Jianguo has lots of fresh ideas, but they seem to be falling on deaf ears. Members of the executive team, for their part, find Jianguo to be largely indifferent to their input. Can Jianguo adjust to this new culture? And can he succeed without sacrificing his identity? Three experts comment on this fictional case study: Katherine Tsang, the CEO of Standard Chartered Bank in Shanghai, explains the cultural differences between China and France and recommends that Jianguo push his thinking beyond the Chinese market. She also suggests that the company give all its executive team members multicultural training so they have the tools to understand one another and work together effectively. Mansour Javidan, the dean of research and a professor at Thunderbird School of Global Management, acknowledges that Jianguo's transition would be easier if he had the full support of the CEO, Alain Deronde. But since that isn't forthcoming, he advises Jianguo to work with Alain to develop targets for growth in emerging and traditional markets and a plan for building an infrastructure to achieve those goals. James Champy, the chairman of consulting for Perot Systems, is surprised that a family business would choose an "outsider" for this important post, but he recognizes it as a wise strategic move. He says that Jianguo needs a coach and should focus on learning the home market first, before trying to make inroads further afield.